

“The Great Exchange, Part 2” 2 Cor 5:21, Sermon Notes
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Saving Grace Bible Church
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Easter Morning Worship Service

Text

“He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21 NAS)

Textual Purpose

To give the reason why we should be reconciled to God

Sermonic Purpose

To explain the doctrine of justification and the gospel of penal substitution and identify its importance for us today

Introduction

I love Easter for it is the vindication of God

- God created the heavens and the earth
- The greatness of this world, let alone the universe demonstrates this reality BUT the Bible specifically explains it
- God created this world to house mankind. It perfectly sustains life
 - It is equipped to sustain life
 - Renewable oxygen
 - Renewable food sources
 - Temperate climate
- Man was created in the image of God
 - Mankind bears the image of God
 - This means we can reason, communicate, express all the attributes of personhood
 - Most importantly it means that we are moral creatures able to do good and evil
 - By this we are able to reflect God
- All things point to God, but only Man reflects the image of God
 - Man rules over this natural world
 - Despite the attempts of many to make a monkey out of man, mankind rules and subdues this planet
 - Many want to deny or even erase the distinction between man and animals but simply go to SeaWorld and you will see that Killer Whales are not domesticating Humans but it is the other way around

Man was created to have fellowship with God. Man was created to commune with God, to engage God directly

- God does not come to this earth to talk to donkeys
- He may talk through them to get a wayward prophet's attention but He is not talking to them
- God comes to communion with us. To fellowship with us. To engage with us

We who are in Christ Jesus experience this restored relationship. What was lost to us has been restored through Christ. What was void has now been found and it is the message of Easter, the message of Christ's death and resurrection which gives us the basis for reconciliation with God

1. Many suppose that they are so far separated from God that they must get their life in order again so that God will accept them

- Sadly those who believe this will never find reconciliation with God because they cannot do anything to make themselves right before God

2. Some suppose that Christ came and died simply to be a good example for them to follow

- Sadly this fails to see that man's problem is more than being misguided he is actively opposed to God

3. Others assume that God needed to pay a ransom to Satan to free us. The great exchange was for Satan who was holding us captive

- This view fails to understand God and His power. Satan has no power or authority over God and even Satan must bow to the will of God

4. Still more men say today who needs God. I am good enough on my own. My life is fine

- And indeed they may feel fine. But then why do you feel shame when you do wrong?
- What is normal behavior?
- How can random impersonal chance create order and complexity? That is if the theory of Evolution is true, just given enough time and material random particles and materials will come together to create, with enough time, life as you see it now. If this is the case then how come when hurricanes go through junk yards we are not seeing planes, or cars, or bikes, or even skateboards being made?
- The man who says I am fine without God has no answers to life
- They are as the scriptures say fools, who say there is no God. (Psa 14:1; 53:1)

Yes man has a sin problem and needs to have it remedied. But as man tries to clean himself up he is like the person who has grease on his hands and is trying wash it off with water. The more he scrubs with water alone the more the grease spreads. This is true with sin also. The more he tries to clean up his life the more the sin spreads

Yes we need to know how we are to live but Christ is more than an example to us

Yes we have an enemy who seeks to lead us away from God and uses many wicked people to harm others, including the righteous

And indeed man has an ignorance problem, which keeps him from knowing God but these are not man's greatest problem

No, our greatest problem is a God problem

1. He is Holy and we are not. Even if we were cleaned up we could not make up for our past failures

2. Naturally we do not know Him and the god of this world has blinded the eyes of those who are in unbelief

“In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:4 NAS)

3. This God who is Holy, who has created all things, who has all power, all knowledge, and is present everywhere is a natural enemy to those who are not righteous.

This is man’s greatest problem, God. And man’s greatest need is to be reconciled to God

- God is the source of life and apart from God there is death. You like life right? You need God
- God is the creator of man and has designed man. That is he knows how we are to live to be the most blessed
- God is the source of peace and comfort and the other fruits of righteousness. Apart from God there is nothing good
- Man needs God and yet we are separated from God

Now, what Easter demonstrates, year after year, is that God solves the problem

- Holy God reconciles with sinful man

How can God be just and the justifier?

- How can God be both merciful and just?
 - That is, we can understand a God who can be just with sinners and condemn them all but He would not be merciful
 - We can hope that God would be merciful to sinners and not hold their sin against them but then He would not be just

The Answer to this question is the great doctrine of justification which is explained in the last verse of 2 Cor 5:

²¹ “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:1-21 NAS)

In this text we have four truths about the gospel of reconciliation which unites us to God

1. God is our Savior
2. Christ is our Substitute
3. We are Sinners
4. Righteousness Saves

Four grand truths which explain the gospel and which are at the heart of the message of reconciliation with God

- These are four truths which strengthen the importance of the doctrine of justification

1. God is our Savior

We did not initialize salvation, God did

- Let me prove this to you. No one who does not know Jesus Christ, who woke up this morning and came to Church came because they decided they wanted God
 - Now maybe someone came because they knew they needed
 - Most come because some family member desperately pleaded with them to come
 - Some may have come for curiosity
 - Still more came for their yearly checkup to let God know you are still around
- But sinful man does not seek after God. Rom 3:11

But on the other hand our text says God sought us:

“He made”

God solved the complex problem of reconciliation

- God made the sinner and the holy unite without violating His holiness
- God made the plan

“He designed it. He initiated it. And He executed it. So that Jesus went to the cross not because men turned on Him, though they did, Jesus went to the cross not because seducing spirits orchestrated the minds of the religious leaders of Judaism to plot His death, though they did. Jesus went to the cross not because an angry mob screamed for His blood, though they did.”

- Yes man acted
- Yes demonic forces were at work
- Yes an angry mob followed Him to the cross
- Yes Judas betrayed Him
- Yes Pilate condemned Him
- Yes the soldiers mocked Him and beat Him and finally crucified Him
- But it was God who put Him there

“Jesus went to the cross because God planned it. God purposed it. And God designed it as the absolutely necessary means by which and by which alone reconciliation could take place. That's why Jesus said, "I came into the world to do the Father's will." John 6:38

- "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 6:38 NAS)

“That's why in [John 18:11](#) He said, "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given Me?" meaning the cup of wrath.”

“That's why in Hebrews chapter 10 the Lord Jesus is quoted as saying, "A body Thou hast prepared Me and I have come to do Thy will, O God." Heb 10:5-7

- “Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, But a body Thou hast prepared for Me;⁶ In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure.⁷ "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.'" (Hebrews 10:5-7 NAS)

“That's why in Acts chapter 2 [verse 23] when Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost and preached to the population of Jerusalem, many of whom had been screaming for the blood of Jesus and been guilty of calling for His execution, Peter says to that crowd, "You have killed the Son of God by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." In other words, you did your evil deed but it was all in the plan of the Father.” JFM 15 Words of Hope

When did God start this work?

- Before the foundation of the world
- By His plan by the counsel of His will

Only God could do this work

- Only God could call the second member of the Trinity to leave the throne room of heaven and enter into this world in humble condition to save sinners
- Only God can satisfy the righteous demands of the law
- Only God could pay the full price of sin
- Only God knows how to satisfy the demands of His perfect justice and demanding holiness
- Only God can make the sinner alive
- Only God could raise the dead
- Only God could transform the heart
- Only God could protect His Son until His crucifixion
- Only God could declare from ages past what would take place and then perfectly fulfill it in and through Christ
- Only God can solve the problem of sin

Only God would do the work

- Rom 3:11 – Says man does not desire to do this work
- But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 NAS)
- For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:10 NAS)
- Only God would seek His enemy to be restored to Him
- Only God would reach out to the people that have turned from Him
- Only God would care for the people who have mocked Him
- Only God would show mercy to a people who did not deserve Mercy

The religions of the world present an indifferent or uncaring deity

- Christianity declares a God who cares, loves, seeks, and communes with His people

The religions of the world present a god who hates sin and provides no remedy

- Christianity reveals a God who hates sin and provides the remedy to sin

The remedy is provided by God Himself

- The remedy is the spotless Son of God taking the sinners place to bear the wrath of God so that the sinner can take the spotless son's place as heirs of eternal life

1. God is our Savior

2. Christ is our Substitute

“Him who knew no sin to be sin” vs 21

Literally the Greek reads “The one who knew no sin, on behalf of us, sin He made.”

Who was made to be sin? “The one who knew no sin”

- Well there are not a lot of choices here
- There is only one, Jesus Christ

He was the spotless one and everyone knew it

- The Unbelieving Jews could not convict Jesus of sin
 - If there was anyone who wanted to convict Jesus of sin it was them
 - They tried to come up with charges against him but could not
 - They brought in false witnesses to find something they could say against him
 - John 8:46 "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? (John 8:46 NAS)
 - They could not say a thing. They wanted to but had nothing
- Pilate affirms the innocence of Christ
 - And Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, "I find no guilt in this man." (Luke 23:4 NAS)
 - “and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him." (Luke 23:14 NAS)
 - “And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt *demanding* death; I will therefore punish Him and release Him." (Luke 23:22 NAS)
- The Thief on the cross knew Jesus was innocent
 - “But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹"And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." (Luke 23:40-41 NAS)
- Even the Centurion at the cross acknowledge Jesus innocence
 - “Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he *began* praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent." (Luke 23:47 NAS)

Luke Chapter 23 is the chapter recording that Jesus was innocent.

- He was without sin in the World

Even the Apostles acknowledge Jesus innocence

- Look if anyone knows our sins it is the people who live closely with us
- They see us in our vulnerable moments
- They see us when we are weak
- They see our fears, lusts, and idolatries
- They see our self-will and self-love and selfish ambition better and clearer than anyone around us

So what did the Apostles say about Jesus' Innocence?

- John said
 - "And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin." (1 John 3:5 NAS)
 - Clearly the antecedent here is the one who appeared to take away sins – Jesus
- The Writer of Hebrews
 - "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin." (Hebrews 4:15 NAS)
- Then of course there is Peter
 - "but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ.*" (1 Peter 1:19 NAS)
 - "who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;²⁴ and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:22-24 NAS)
 - "For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the just for the unjust*, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (1 Peter 3:18 NAS)

If Christ is innocent then what does it mean that He was "made sin"?

- It does not mean He became sinful
 - It does not mean that He actually started sinning Himself
 - Or that even in taking on humanity He took on a corrupt nature
 - No He as the eternal Son of God was not able to sin

So what does it mean that Jesus was made sin? It means that He became our substitute. He took our place. He came and died for us

- The just died for the unjust
- The righteous laid down His life for the unrighteous
- He bore our sins

How is Christ our substitute?

3 ways described in God's Word that makes Christ our perfect substitute. There is no one way which best describes how Christ was our substitute. All three of these ideas go together and strengthen each other

1. Christ is our substitute because He is in union with the Sinner – He is made our head. He is the first born among His people

He is in union with us because he is person like we are

- He is a human being
- He is called the Son of Man
- He has mother, and brothers and sisters
- He was a part of a family with a historical lineage
- He ate, slept, experienced the full range of human emotions
- He walked with us and was one of us

But more importantly he is head over all especially of those who believe

- “And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.” (Colossians 1:17-18 NAS)
- “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man. . .” (1 Corinthians 11:3 NAS)
- “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church” (Ephesians 1:22 NAS)
- “but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ,” (Ephesians 4:15 NAS)
- “and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;” (Colossians 2:10 NAS)

The believer then is in a vital union with Christ which began in eternity past when the Father gave us to the son (Eph 1:3-14), which was evidenced in history when He went to the cross as our substitute to mediate our relationship to God (1 Pet 2:22-24) and then was applied to us when we were regenerated and believed upon Christ having turned from our sins (Gal 2:20).

Christ can be our perfect substitute because we are in union with Him. He is a human like we are. He is the head of all humanity. And most importantly He is the head of every Christian as the Head of the Church

- But Christ is also made sin as our perfect substitute

2. By Substitution – In Particular a Penal Substitution. He bore the wrath of God for us. By this He was made sin

The wages of sin is death

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23 NAS)

- Christ then went to the cross to bear our sins
- He went to propitiate the wrath of God, that is to satisfy God’s wrath
- He went to atone for sin

When Christ went to the cross He went as the perfect sacrifice for sin

- He went as the only sacrifice for sin
- He went to the cross as the only sacrifice sufficient to pay for the sins of the whole world
- In this sense, and this sense alone, He went to the cross for the whole world, He went as the perfect and sufficient sacrifice

But the death He died, He died for us, His people

- He atoned for the sins of His people
- He bore the wrath of God for the sins of all those who would believe
- He atoned for all of our sins
 - He covered the believers past, present, and future sins
 - This is plainly obvious friends because in history's timeline Christ died for all of our sins before we were even born, so He had to cover every sin that was ever committed by His church before they sinned

He is the sacrifice that all must turn to be saved for He alone has atoned for the sins of His people

- The OT Predicted this

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.” (Isaiah 53:5-6 NAS)

So He was made sin by being made the perfect substitute to bear our wrath

- He was put in our place
- He was given our judgment
- He satisfied God's justice
- He bore our penalty as our perfect substitute

By union Christ was made sin, by substitution Christ was made sin, and by imputation Christ was made sin:

3. By Imputation – That is by our sin being credited to His account

Now when we think about Christ being made sin we think about primarily this idea of imputation. And we should

- Impute – means to attribute or to ascribe something
- Sin was ascribed to Christ's account
- In particular our sins, the sins of His chosen people, the sins of the elect, the sins of those who have been called out by God.
- Those sins which were rightfully ours, which we sin willfully or ignorantly performed were credited to His account.
- He went to the cross declared guilty
- He went to the cross with the debt of our sins on His account

- He went before the divine Judge carrying with him each and every one of our transgressions and received the divine condemnation and then received the sentence of death and finally was executed for our sins.

Col 2:13-14

“And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Colossians 2:13-14 NAS)

Christ is our Savior, because in perfect solidarity He went to the cross for us. He went as our head, the representative of the human race. He went as our Penal Substitute to bear the wrath of God. He went and was credited with our unrighteousness

1. God is our Savior

2. Christ is our Substitute

3. We are Sinners

“on our behalf”

We contributed nothing to our salvation but our need to be saved

- We brought the sin
- We brought the corruption and guilt
- We have the need

I don't need to prove this to you

- You conscience does this for me
- The Holy Spirit convicts God's people

Rom 3:10-18

as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one;¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."¹³ "Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving," "The poison of asps is under their lips";¹⁴ "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness";¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood,¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their paths,¹⁷ And the path of peace have they not known."¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:10-18 NAS)

The Father knew our condition and understood His righteous demands

- He sends the Son, places upon the Son our guilt, and delivers the Son to bear His wrath all because we sinned. We violated the law. We turned from God. We were separated
- Because God was seeking to reconcile, because God desired to reconcile, He sent His Son

Why did He do all of this? Because God saves

Because Christ is the Substitute

Because we are in need

How does He save us? By giving us His righteousness:

4. The Righteousness of God Saves

“so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”

God did this work so that we could become righteous

- This is the great exchange
- Christ made a sinner by the imputation of our guilt, we are made perfect by the imputation of His righteousness

The Father knew our condition and understood His righteous demands

What is righteousness? The righteousness of God?

- It is easier to explain righteousness by what it does than by what it is
- Definition of what it is: “Righteousness is the state of being in conformity to the glory of God.”
- Or simply it is “being just like God”

What does righteousness do?

Rom 4-5 describes that by righteousness we are justified and by justification we have peace with God

Righteousness keeps the law of God as it lives according to God’s law

Righteousness frees us from the fear of wrath

You who believe in an easy gospel that makes no demands to live for God let me ask you: If Christ had to die for your sin, will you not show the same love back to Him and die to your own desires to live for Him?

You who believe that you could lose the hope of salvation by dying in sin, if Christ went to the cross to bear our sins what makes you think there would be one sin He would not cover?

How do we who have been opposed to God become just like God?

Our text says “so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Through Jesus Christ we are given the righteousness of God

“and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith.” (Philippians 3:9 NAS)

This is the gospel of reconciliation with God

- Mind you not like God in power, wisdom, knowledge – But like God in moral perfection
- Do you want to be reconciled to God? Well you are in luck
 - God has provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him

Here is the message of Christianity: God saw our sin. He saw our rebellion, our guilt, and our shame. He knew His righteous and just demands of His perfect holiness and He knew He could not compromise by simply turning a blind eye to sin. So God sends the second member of the Trinity to earth to live the life we could not live. Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Son of Man, lived under the law and obeyed it perfectly and then went to the cross credited for all of our sins. Imputed to His account was every transgression we ever committed or will commit. He then died on the cross and on the 3rd day was resurrected to justify sinners (Rom 4:25). At the moment of our faith, we who are in Christ, were credited with the righteousness of God as it was imputed to our account. We who have faith in God stand before God covered in a perfect righteousness as if we have never sinned. Holy God can justly condemn the sinless Christ because He was credited with our sin so that He can just declare us innocent because we are clothed with the righteousness of God. Holy God, can and will have perfect fellowship with us, because we by our vital union with our perfect substitute have received the fullness of God's perfect righteousness imputed to our account so that we could be reconciled to God forever

Oh sinner will you remain stubborn in rejection of God's love and mercy?

Oh sinner will you say to God you know a better way?

Oh sinner will you say you believe but not love Him by following Him?

Oh sinner can there be any other way that offers peace and rest with GOD?

- No religion but that of Christianity offers peace with God
- No religion but that of Christianity offers freedom from power, penalty, and eventually presence of sin

Turn this day, this hour, this moment and place yourself in humility at the feet of Christ and call out "God be merciful to me a sinner" then look to Christ and see that mercy has been lavishly stored up for you in Christ

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20 NAS)

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