

Having begun a short study on the theme of Putting on Christ last week, if you recall, I gave an overview of this text. We saw there's two commands: one is positive (put on the Lord Jesus Christ), the other negative (and make no provision for the flesh).

Thus, with reference to the positive (putting on Christ), I suggested last week this entailed making use of Christ in all that He is and has. We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to put Him on as the God-Man Mediator (our prophet, priest, and king).

I summarized this with three words: reckoning, obtaining, and imitating, and thus I want to come to the first of these this morning, and to the theme—Gospel Reckoning. We will do so under three headings: Its Meaning (what is it); Its Importance (why does it matter); Its implementation (how is it done).

- I. Its Meaning
- II. Its Importance
- III. Its Implementation

I. Its Meaning

1. Here I simply want to survey several NT texts that shed light on our theme of Gospel Reckoning and then offer a practical definition.
2. (1) Romans 6:11—"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."
3. Having looked at this text briefly last week, let me simply remind you this is the first command in the book of Romans.
4. To "reckon" is to "calculate"—the word literally means "to take into account"—to "consider" or "regard."
5. It entails taking into account what is already true—to consider or regard as true that which is in fact true.
6. Thus, when Paul tells us to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, he isn't telling us become dead to sin and alive to God.
7. But he's telling us to consider ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God—to take into account what's true.
8. John Murray—"What is commanded needs to be carefully noted. We are not commanded to become dead to sin and alive to God; these are presupposed. And it is not by reckoning these to be facts that they become facts. The force of the imperative is that we are to reckon with and appreciate the facts which we already obtain by virtue of union with Christ."
9. Notice what we are to reckon—"reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."
10. I want you to remember something I said last week in our SS class about initial or definitive sanctification.
11. This refers to the death of the old man and the resurrection of the new—we have died to sin as a master (v7).
12. This is what Paul wanted his readers to reckon or consider—they were dead to sin but alive to God in Christ.
13. MLJ—"We are to reckon as true about ourselves not something that we want to be true, but something that is actually true of us."
14. (2) Ephesians 6:14—"Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness."

15. Here I am specifically thinking about the breastplate of righteousness, something Christians must put on.
16. Now, if you consider the commentators, you will find, there's been some debate as to what this righteousness entails.
17. Some suggest it refers to a life of practical righteousness, whereas others to the perfect righteousness of Christ.
18. I want to suggest, while we must distinguish between these two, we can never sever or separate them.
19. It's for this reason, the OT often speaks of them together as a summary of the salvation we find in Christ.
20. Isa.45:8—"Rain down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together. I, the LORD, have created it (54:17; 59:16-17)."
21. Notice "salvation" and "righteousness" are basically synonymous—salvation from sin's penalty and power.
22. Thus, while we must distinguish between these two aspects of righteousness, we can never separate them.
23. And yet, as important as our practical righteousness is, if that's all we had, it would be a poor breastplate.
24. While we have to put on a practical righteousness, and as we shall see putting on Christ includes this, I suggest that primarily speaking, the only righteousness that protects our spiritual vitals is the righteousness of Christ received by faith.
25. (3) 1John 2:1-2—"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but also for the whole world."
26. It was John's desire that his readers do not sin, but if and when they do, they must remember two things—they have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and is also their propitiation.
27. This is simply another way of saying—if and when they sin, they must "put on the Lord Jesus Christ."
28. Why else would he tell them this—"if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
29. Let me paraphrase—"if and when you sin, remember you are accepted and forgiven for the sake of Christ."
30. Obviously, John is far from teaching lawlessness—over and over again he clarifies, Christians don't live in unrepentant sin.
31. Furthermore, when they do sin, they actually sin, and must confess their sin to God and ask for forgiveness.
32. We've talked about Antinomianism as SS calls, which refers to the error that Christians no longer obey the TC.
33. One of the major errors of the Antinomians was that God sees no sin in the believer; they actually taught a form of Perfectionism.
34. As you can imagine, they loved 1Jn.2:1-2—when you sin, remember you have a Righteousness in heaven.
35. Now, while they erred and misused 1Jn.2:1-2, this text teaches us an important point every Christian should remember.
36. Though we sin often, we must be ever mindful, this does nothing to change our justification before God.

37. Thus, John is basically saying the same thing as Paul in Romans 13:14—"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."
38. (4) 1Pet.4:1-2—"Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."
39. Peter is telling us to have the same mindset as our Savior, who suffered for sin once and for all (Rom.6:10).
40. Likewise, we too have suffered in the flesh and ceased from sin—that is, the old man has died and we are freed from sin as a master.
41. The practical application is found in v2—"that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."
42. Just as Christ suffered and died for sin, so we too have suffered and died for sin (as a ruling principle).
43. But the phrase I'm after here is found in v1—"arm yourselves also with the same mind"—that is, that you've ceased from sin.
44. To cease from sin is to die to it as a master, Rom.6:7—"For he who has died has been freed from sin."
45. To "cease from sin" and "freed from sin" are the same things—we've ceased our former relationship to it.
46. Thus, by Gospel Reckoning I mean, we must be confident of who and what we are in Christ—forgiven, accepted, dead to sin, the law, and the world, and alive to God in Christ.
47. Each of these are past facts, equally true of every Christian without exception, joined to Christ by faith.
48. Regardless if you understand them or think about them, they are nevertheless true if you are a Christian.
49. Thus, when it comes to Gospel Reckoning, we are to reckon or consider past facts as present realities.
50. We are to reckon, count, or consider ourselves as having put on Christ in our justification and initial sanctification.

II. Its Importance

1. Here I simply want to suggest three, of many reasons, why Gospel Reckoning is of such great importance.
2. But before I do that, I want to quote from pastor Waldron from his exposition of our Confession, where he speaks about the primary activities of sanctification.
3. If you remember, ongoing sanctification refers to the process of becoming more and more like Christ.
4. Sam Waldron—"The basic activities which the Word of God demands of us in the prosecution of ongoing sanctification can be summarized under two headings: confident reckoning and strenuous working. The first thing we must do is confidently reckon that what God says has happened in the life of His people is true for us. We must believingly survey what God has done and will do for us in Christ."
5. According to Pastor Sam the entire Christian life can be summarized in confident reckoning and strenuous working.
6. (1) It recalls resources—that is, to know who and what we are in Christ reminds us of what we possess in Christ.
7. If we are forgiven, accepted, adopted, freed from sin and alive in Christ, then we have unlimited resources.

8. Perhaps I can put it like this—reckoning reminds us whose side we are on, and whose side we are not on.
9. Gospel reckoning reminds us we are on the Lord's side—it reminds us if God is for us who can be against us.
10. Thus, at its very heart, Gospel Reckoning is us reckoning or considering we are friends and sons of God.
11. And if we are friends and sons of God—if we are on God's side—then we have unlimited recourses at hand.
12. Let me ask you—how important is it, in going into battle, to know with certainty who is and is not your enemy.
13. Furthermore, we must not only know who's side we are on, but we must also the resources our side has.
14. Rom.5:1-2—"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
15. (a) Gospel reckoning, v1—"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
16. (b) Abundant provision, v2—"through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand."
17. (2) It provides protection—to know who and what we are in Christ, protects us from three things (accusations, enticements, discouragements).
18. (a) Accusations—by this I mean, the accusations of our own conscience and Satan—accusing us of sin, guilt, failure, and hypocrisy.
19. (b) Enticements—by this I refer to enticements from our former masters—sin, Satan, and this world.
20. When these come calling, you have to say them—I am no longer your slave: I have been bought at a price.
21. Gal.2:20—"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."
22. If you notice, Paul speaks of two "Is"—"I have been crucified...I no longer live"—this refers to the old man.
23. "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God"—this refers to the new man.
24. There is a sense in which, according to Pastor Sam, ½ of the Christian life is rightly understanding these "Is."
25. The old man, that was a slave to sin, Satan, and the world has been crucified with Christ and no longer lives.
26. For example, think of a slave that served his master for decades only finally to be freed from his mastery.
27. The freed slave may be tempted to obey his former master, but must reprogram his thinking to align with truth.
28. He must reckon himself as free from his master—he must reckon himself as a free and liberated man.
29. (c) Discouragements—by this I mean, when we feel down-and-out, depressed, discouraged, and dejected.
30. (3) It provides motivation—to know who and what we are in Christ, will motivate us to walk in His commandments.

31. Lev.22:31-33—"Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD. You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD."
32. Rom.6:11-14—"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

III. Its Implementation

1. In closing, I want to suggest three practical helps to assist you in putting on Christ by way of Gospel Reckoning.
2. (1) Understand the truth—we must have a clear understanding of what it is we are seeking to reckon.
3. It's impossible to reckon something without understanding what we are reckoning—we must understand what is true of us and why.
4. This means, the primary way we reckon ourselves forgiven, accepted, dead to sin and alive to God, is through meditation and study.
5. This aspect of putting on Christ takes place in the mind and heart—we have to understand in our hearts, all that's true of us.
6. And friends, the only way we grow in heart knowledge is through prayerful meditation on the text of Scripture.
7. And I personally believe this is why few Christians are familiar with the discipline of Gospel Reckoning.
8. We live in a day of fast-food and quick results—everyone wants the short and easy way—but putting on Christ takes work.
9. (2) Believe the truth—that is, believe this is true of you—these are truths true of me—I am forgiven, accepted, adopted, died to sin and alive to God.
10. And how am I all of these things? Because I am in Christ! These are all the results of putting on Christ in our conversion.
11. Thus, we must not only understand what is true, we must have confidence it is true of us—we must believe it.
12. Remember, believing doesn't make it true—we believe it because it is true—we believe it because says so.
13. Yet, someone may object—"I find it very difficult to testify that I am dead to sin and alive to God in Christ.
14. I believe many if not most Christians think this way—but remember what we learned last week—the flesh remains (and remains evil).
15. But me ask you an honest question—has the old man died and a new man been raised in his place? Do you believe in Christ as your Lord and Savior? Do you desire to love Him and walk in His commandments?
16. Well if so, you are a new man, because these are only true of the new man, and never true of the old man.
17. (3) Live the truth—that is, live in light of the truth—and how do we do that? "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."
18. Every day you must put on Christ—you must reckon yourselves forgiven, accepted, adopted, dead to sin, the law, and world, and alive to God in Christ.