

**THE CHURCH ON OFFENSE IN
CONFLICTED DAYS
FALL/WINTER 2020/2021
“THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSTITUTION”
February 03, 2021**

EPHESIANS 4:25-32 and other selected support Scriptures

I. PAUL'S PREPARATION OF THE EPHESIANS

- A. He held back nothing that was PROFITABLE v. 20
- B. He testified that the gospel was about REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD and FAITH TOWARD THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. That means that they would have to change their mind about who the Sovereign One was and put their trust in the Son of the Sovereign One, the Lord Jesus Christ v. 27
- C. He testified of the GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD v. 24
- D. The main focus of his preaching was PROCLAIMING THE KINGDOM OF GOD. v.25
- E. He declared to them the WHOLE COUNSEL (WILL, PURPOSE, INTENT, DESIRE) OF GOD.

He trusted God with them, encouraging them to guard themselves against the FALSE TEACHERS and FALSE TEACHING that was going to come.

TONIGHT: we examine together a major principle God had given centuries before but makes a special application of it to human behavior. That principle is one I call the PRINCIPLE OF SUBSTITUTION or THE PRINCIPLE OF EXCHANGE. Let's jump into this and see if I can demonstrate through the holy text what I mean. Perhaps, afterward, you will agree with me.

II. SUBSTITUTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Substitution is the basis of sacrifices
 - 1. God allowed a living animal to substitute for the death of the sinner in his sacrifice
 - 2. The animal was not guilty of anything but when the sinner placed his hands on the animal's head his sin and guilt was transferred to the animal. When he killed the animal, the animal substituted for him. God accepted the animal's death as if it is the death of the sinner, the payment for the wages of sin.

- 3. The sacrifice could cover the guilt of the sin and pay its wages but it could not give the sinner the needed righteousness to fully justify him. Justification has always been through faith. The sinner trusted the sacrificial animal, in the eyes of God, had cleared his account with God but it did not justify him. David spoke of this in Psalm 51 when he could see God was not satisfied with the blood of bulls and goats, a principle repeated by Isaiah as well. He knew that animals could not take away his sin
- B. The principle of substitution was used to spare the life of another.
 - 1. When God sent Adam and Eve from their home in paradise, He dressed them in the skin of an animal. That animal had to sacrifice his life, the shedding of his blood, in order to provide a spared life to the sinning couple. Their nakedness, which they had tried to cover with homemade fig-leaf aprons, was replaced with animal skins which covered the couple, allowing them to live.
 - 2. When Abraham was called on by God to offer his son of promise, Isaac, he, by faith, complied. When the whole of the sacrifice was ready and his son was bound on the altar and the wood, God made Abraham stop. It was a test of Abraham's faith in and commitment to God. As you recall, there was a lamb caught in a thicket and that lamb substituted for the life of Isaac, sparing his life.
 - 3. Even in the Passover, the paschal lamb's blood on the doorposts of the house spared the lives of all those within. It was their substitute
 - 4. The first born of every living creature by God's decree belonged to God, even the firstborn of the people of God. The first born of the animals was to be sacrificed to God in remembrance of the Passover time. But the children were not to be offered as sacrifices. God set up a system of substitution where the couple could redeem or spare their child's life by the sacrifice of certain animals or birds.
 - 5. When Joseph had tricked his brothers by putting his cup in Benjamin's sack, he demanded that Benjamin stay with him in Egypt. Judah knew that would break his father's heart and take his life. He pleaded with Joseph to let him, Judah, be in the place of his little brother for the sake of sparing his father

the sorrow. He was asking to be the substitute or he was exchanging his life for that of Benjamin.

6. God allowed the chosen tribe of Levi to be the substitute for all the firstborn of Israel. They would be the substitutes for the offering up of the firstborn children in their families.

III. THE ULTIMATE SUBSTITUTION

A. When thinking of substitution, one can think no higher a thought of it than Jesus, the Christ. He is the ultimate substitute. He lived, died and rose again as our substitute!

1. As Jesus lived on earth, he lived as the substitute for Israel, reworking the history of their failures. Tempted, rejected, in need, he suffered everything they had suffered yet without sin. He lived in full and complete faith always, pleasing God in all He did. This would allow God to exchange or substitute His life for ours, by faith.
2. When He died on the cross, the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He is our substitute. His life is being exchanged for ours to allow us to live forever with God. His innocence is receiving my guilt and wrong, taking it completely away, not merely covering it as all previous repetitive sacrifices had done. His righteous life is being totally stained with our iniquities and He is becoming sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him,
3. When He is risen from the dead, it is proof of the satisfaction of God for Christ's payment of sin with His own life. But the beauty for us is that He is our substitute, giving to us His righteousness in the place of our sin! Our sin is gone!

B. Through the principle of His ultimate substitution He lays down a pattern of behavior for the Spirit-filled believer in Him.

1. Though our sin is gone, experience teaches us that we can still sin. It is such a total disappointment to the new believer who has felt so freed by trusting Christ and feeling that burden gone, to then revert to some sin. It crushes him or her. "That wasn't supposed to happen. I am free of sin"
2. That sin is the habituated life we learned in our flesh from the very old man that was later crucified with Christ. We had some years to learn the ways of sin and some of us learned better than others! Those habits, though plaguing to us and playing mischief with our lives, are like the idolatrous people

groups God left with the children of Israel while they tried to conquering Canaan. They were pesky and dangerous. But eventually they drove them out.

3. Learning new godly habits requires us to use the principle of substitution or exchange. We are going to exchange a bad habit for a godly one. Just as God has done for us.
4. Let's look at our text for tonight.
 - a. How do we stop lying? We exchange truth telling for lying. We trust that our sin and our neighbor's sin has been paid for by Christ's substitution. We have nothing to fear of the truth. Transparency and vulnerability may seem dangerous and risky but in the long run such truth telling will bring much more open and enjoyable relationships since both parties know there are no secrets or hidden places.
 - b. How do we handle anger? Anger is a natural part of being in the image of God. There are many things that can and should make us angry. That often leads to harmful actions that Scripture tell us cannot work the righteousness of God. When we allow ourselves to be angered (no one can make you angry; you are choosing to be angry) be very cautious about the action you take with it. Instead of acting on it get rid of the cause of it before the sun goes down or by the end of your day. Confess sin of yourself for getting angry and for the one who was the source of your response. Realize you are not obligated to act on that action done by another. Give it to Christ. Before acting pray and speak to Christ about what to say or do. Think about what Christ has done for you and exchange your feeling of indignation for His grace and mercy that spared you
 - c. How do we stop stealing? By getting a paying job to provide for you and your family, and be ready to give to someone in need.
 - d. How do we stop speaking injuriously? We begin the practice of encouragement. Now in each of these examples He is telling us we have to take ownership for our actions and motivations, and realize Christ died for them. We put the sinful, habituated response away and allow the Spirit of begin to exchange that response to a godly one. So in this case, get hold of your old nasty speaking tongue and teach

it to say the kind of encouraging, faith-filled, love-driven, life-giving words that Christ offers us.

- e. How do we get over being bitter? Drop your sovereign right to be pacified by others to your expectations and realize they, like you, can and will fail. They cannot live up to your expectations. Exchange your expectation of them with a good healthy dose of reality of your own sinfulness that Christ gave His life for and forgive them even before they ask. Don't let the cycle of expectations through the emotions leading to malice get you. Exchange them for Christ's life. Put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking with all malice be put away from you and forgive as Christ has forgiven you.*