

Christ's Work for Us

By Don Green

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Bible Verse: Matthew 5:17-20
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Truth Community Church
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

Well, I hope you won't mind me just saying what I'm about to say before we turn to God's word. I've sung those songs as many as you have as well at many many communion services over the years, communion services here at Truth Community Church, communion services led by our friend John MacArthur at Grace Community Church out in California, and it gives me a little bit of a sense of longing for those times and to have all of you here in the room together again is something that will be a wonderful thing for us to share communion together again whenever the Lord allows, but just had that aching sense of emptiness as we were singing missing you, and yet in a vertical sense rejoicing all over again the work of Christ on our behalf. So glad to have you with us.

Now last night if you were with us and even if you weren't, we had a sobering study that we titled "Jesus on Hell," and we looked at the many many places that Jesus Christ taught about the reality of a coming eternal judgment on sinners that will last forever and ever. Hell is real, we said, hell is painful, we said, and hell is eternal. These are all things that flow directly from the teaching of Christ himself. It's a serious mistake for someone to underestimate the commitment of Jesus Christ to the vindication of the law of God, and the reality that God will vindicate the violations of his law, every one of them will be accounted for when all things are said and done in the end of time. Hell is necessary. Sinners like you and I, we have broken God's law and that requires a response from a holy God. He can't simply dismiss sin as though nothing had happened, he can't simply brush it under the tablecloth, so to speak. No, a violation of the law requires the penalty that the law requires and the law must be upheld because it comes from a righteous God, and the law itself is righteous, good and perfect, and so when it is broken, there are consequences that follow from that.

The Apostle Paul in Romans 3:19 said this, he said, "whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." What he's saying is that a proper understanding of the law of God brings us to understand our sin and our helplessness. It convicts us of our guilt and realizes that we are under the just judgment of a holy God and that has consequences. It shows us that God has an awesome and an awful majesty as the lawgiver, if you remember the way things thundered and quaked when God gave the law to Moses back in the book of Exodus, God has an awful majesty

and his law thunders when it speaks and all of this, the majesty of God, the majesty of his law and our brokenness and guilt as lawbreakers, all of that Scripture says is designed to be a tutor to us, a teacher that leads us to understand our need for a Savior and that points us directly to Jesus Christ as that one and only Savior.

The law condemns us and that makes salvation an essential matter for us to consider and the wonderful thing about all of this, understanding that God is a Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that they are unified in their purpose, they are unified in their upholding of the law, the wonderful thing about all of this, the fact that we are guilty sinners before a holy God who in his righteous wrath has every reason and every justification to condemn us immediately into an eternal hell without any further objection or appeal from us, he has every right to do that and yet he didn't. He hasn't done that to you and me, has he? Whether you are a Christian now or not, you are living, you are breathing, you are enjoying something of the measure of God's common grace, and you have not yet received the judgment that your sins deserve. That's a remarkable thing to realize, that there is a parenthesis of time between your guilt and your judgment where God is being gracious to you, not necessarily especially for those of you not in Christ, not gracious unto salvation, at least not yet, but he is giving grace to you and giving you opportunity to seek for Christ before you die and then you face his judgment, as Hebrews 9:27 says, "It's appointed for man to die once and after this comes judgment."

Well, as we consider these things, we realize that there is a merciful gracious aspect to God. It is seen supremely in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ in his love and in his mercy, in his grace and his goodness and his patience, in his kindness, you could just go on and on extolling the virtues of Christ, but in all of those multiplied aspects of his goodness, he did not leave sinners to their just desserts, he did not leave us to simply fall into condemnation, rather he intervened on behalf of sinners and that's why Good Friday is so good. It is so good to know that Christ loved sinners, that his hands are full of mercy for sinners just like you, and those hands that now hold out mercy one day held the nails that he endured as he suffered the wrath of God on behalf of sinners just like you. You see, Christ came to earth to achieve that purpose.

I read one of those verses earlier from 1 Timothy as we opened the service, "It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Understanding that Christ taught on hell, understanding that hell is real and it is painful, and it is eternal, we understand something of the greatness of the fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to intercede on behalf of sinners like you and me. Christ talked about this in other places. The reason that he came was to accomplish a work of redemption. In Matthew 20:28 he said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." Elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke 19, he said, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." And the glory of what we're speaking about tonight shines out in multifaceted splendor in light of what we were saying just last night as Jesus spoke on hell, and here's what you need to see to start to put these things together in your mind, my friend, is that when Christ was speaking on hell and warning about judgment, there was a manifestation, there was a revelation of the wrath of God to be sure in that, but you need to understand that there

was an element of grace and mercy that he would teach that way; there was an element of love and concern for sinners that he would extend such a warning to them. As we saw on Sunday, I believe it was, the days kind of run together for me, Jesus said, "Unless you repent, you will perish." Well, friend, do you see that that is a word of grace from Christ? That it's a gracious warning for you to heed while there is still time? That while your present condition certainly deserves wrath and damnation and condemnation in this eternal hell of which we spoke last night, Christ has come to you, Christ has brought law you to convict you of your sinfulness, and now alongside that warns you that there is judgment coming unless you repent. The judgment right now is conditional. The judgment can be avoided for everyone who flees to Christ for mercy, and the wonderful thing about being a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be able to speak on behalf of one who is so full of goodness, so willing to save sinners just like you, and tonight we see the basis upon which he is able to offer grace to us. It is based on the work that he has done.

Now there's another passage where Christ spoke about the reason for which he came to earth. He came from heaven to earth to die for sinners like us, but in Matthew 5:17 and following, that's going to be our text, you can start turning there in your Bible, in Matthew 5:17, Jesus spoke about the relationship between his coming, the relationship between his Incarnation, and the eternal law of God, and that's what we want to make the basis of our meditation here this evening. Turn to Matthew 5:17 with me as I read through verse 20. Jesus said,

17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus here gives a detailed exposition of why he came to earth. He came to fulfill the law and the prophets and in general this word "fulfill" has the idea of carrying it out, of bringing to pass its intention. In the law and in the prophets, we see the revelation of God and the purposes of God being expressed, the exalted righteousness of God revealed in his law, the purpose of the coming of the Messiah revealed in the prophets, and these things come together in the person of Jesus Christ, and what he is saying is he came in order to accomplish everything that the Old Testament had in mind; down to the smallest of details, down to the smallest stroke of one letter of the law, the equivalent of the jot of an English "i," he says that's how fully and precisely he came to fulfill what the Old Testament had said. And he gives an important distinction and an important clarification as he is beginning to teach here in the Gospel of Matthew, he says that he did not come to abolish the law. Christ did not come to set the law aside and render it of no effect and to make it as something that was canceled, rather he came to fulfill everything that the law

required, and in part that has a significance for our salvation because Christ fulfilled everything that the law demands of us and he fulfilled it on our behalf and that's what we want to consider here this evening. Jesus Christ's fulfillment of the law is essential for our salvation. It is essential for your salvation and two truths will show how he accomplished salvation for us in his coming and in his relationship to the law. Let's just look at those briefly tonight.

First of all, we see that Jesus fulfilled the law in his life. He fulfilled the law in his life and in the way that he lived. In Galatians 4:4 it says that Jesus was born under the law. The law of God is so authoritative that even the Son of God was subject to it as he lived on a man during his time on earth. He was responsible to obey it and that's what he did, and he did it perfectly. There was no sin in him. Not once did he violate the law with anything that he did, with anything that he said, or that any desire or motion of his heart had within him. He was perfectly stainless. He was without blemish under the searching standard of the law, that law which you and I cannot keep and have not kept. We break it repeatedly even as believers. Christ kept it perfectly.

I'm just going to look at a couple of brief passages to show this to remind you of the testimony of Scripture that Christ was without sin. In John 8:46, Jesus asked his enemies, he asked them, he said, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin?" Now that's a powerful indication of his sinlessness and the fact that even his enemies knew that he had never violated the law of God. Jesus invited them to bring a successful charge against him for his violation of God's law, God's requirements, God's demands, and they had nothing to say. Do you see that if there was any guilt in him, they would have quickly pointed it out because they hated him and anything that they could have charged him with, they would have loved to have done, but Jesus could ask that question because he knew that he was blameless and he knew that they knew that he was blameless. So there was a joint testimony in that hour of the sinlessness of Christ. Christ asking the question, he knew the answer ahead of time. The silence of his opponents shows that they knew also Christ was innocent of any violation of the law. Elsewhere in Hebrews 4:15 it says that Jesus was tempted in all things as we are yet without sin. He was without sin and so we have a sinless representative who acts as our Savior and who accomplished salvation on our behalf, and what this has to do with the law is that we see an application of the statement that Jesus made in Matthew 5. He came to fulfill the law and one of the ways that he fulfilled it is that he obeyed it perfectly.

Now why does that matter to us and what does it have to do with our problem with sin? How does it have anything to do with that? Well, my friend, it's really rather simple. God requires perfect obedience to his law. There cannot be a single stain of sin upon anyone if they would enter into the kingdom of heaven, and the consequences of that for you and me is that our sins of our mind, our sins of desire, our sins of word, our sins of deed just multiply a ledger of sin against us that establishes an infinite debt that we owe to the law that we could never pay. We have hopelessly broken God's law, we have hopelessly sinned against him, and we are utterly lost. That's the testimony of Romans 1:18 all the way through chapter 3, verse 19. You can read it at length for yourself. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You are not righteous, no, not one of you, including

me. None of us have sought for God. None of us have kept his word. We are all guilty and condemned by everything that Scripture says about this and that's a real problem because to enter into heaven, Jesus said in that text I read earlier in Matthew 5:20, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. He says in Matthew 5:48, you are to be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect. The standard to go to heaven is utter perfection and no one has met that, no one has met that on their own.

So what Christ's coming shows us is that in his holiness God must and will hold us accountable for our violations of the law, but remember what we opened with in those wonderful texts speaking about the reason that Christ came, he came to seek and to save that which was lost; he came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many; he came to save sinners among whom, Paul said, "I am the foremost." Well, how does this all fit together is that when a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, when he repents of sin and puts his faith in Christ, God gives him an unspeakably great gift. That righteousness that Christ established with his own obedience to the law, God credits that righteousness of Christ to the account of the one who believes in him so that your lack of righteousness before God is met perfectly by the righteousness of Christ which is credited to your account. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 it says that God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. There's this great transfer of responsibility. Christ having fulfilled the law of God perfectly in his life, that righteousness is counted to us as though we had lived it ourselves. Yes, we had not done that. True, we have not fulfilled obedience ourselves, but that is the whole point. It is a gift that God gives to those who believe in Christ. We are given a gift of righteousness that we did not earn, that we did not deserve, that we could never claim as our own. Christ gives us the gift of his infinite righteousness and covers us before the law of God in a way that the law of God is perfectly satisfied on our behalf.

You can turn in your Bibles to Philippians 3:9 where you see this thought expressed as well. Philippians 3:9 as we turn there together, and one day we will get to this verse at Truth Community Church in our exposition of Philippians when we return to it and we gather together. But the Apostle Paul said this, he desires to be found in Christ "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." You see, faith is the means by which we receive this gift of righteousness and that has amazing consequences for your life and for your understanding of your justification, justification being that declaration from God that all of the demands of the law have been satisfied on our behalf and he accepts us as righteous, he pardons us of all of our sins, we are justified in the sense that God accepts us as completely and perfectly righteous and holy, and that is because of what Christ has done on our behalf. The obedience that the law requires was accomplished by Jesus Christ.

Now do you know what that means for you who are Christians? It means that your performance has nothing to do with the basis upon which God accepts you as righteous in his sight. Yes, you and I sin, we stumble, we fall along the way, but that does not diminish the perfect righteousness of Christ which is the basis upon which God accepts

us. Your imperfect obedience is not the ground upon which God accepts you, God accepts you for the sake of the righteousness of his Son because Christ in love offered himself up as a sacrifice, an unblemished lamb on our behalf, and God accepted that sacrifice on our behalf. What this means is that in love for us, in undeserved love for unworthy sinners, Christ graciously came, lived a perfect life, offered that life up as a sacrifice on the cross to satisfy the judgment of God against us, and so Christ stood in our place, represented us, and as God accepted his sacrifice, he also accepted the righteousness of Christ on our behalf. That means that you are no less saved when you sin as a Christian. It also means this, it means that you are no more saved when you're obedient than you were before because our righteousness and the grounds upon which God accepts us is based on the unchanging perfect righteousness of Christ and our obedience does not add to that righteousness because it's already perfect, nor does our sin diminish that righteousness because Christ himself did not sin. So we have a great great gift that Christ has given us in his fulfillment of the law with his life. Christ has obeyed the law on our behalf and God accepts that. Theologians call this his active obedience. Christ obeyed the law in an active way with his life and that perfect obedience fulfills every demand of the law against believers and upon believers.

So let me give you another word to help process this in your mind. Christ acted as our representative. He acted as our substitute. Christ represented us in his obedience to the law and God accepts his representation on our behalf so that the demands of the law have been fully met on our behalf. That means this, my friends, it means for those who believe in Christ, we do not have to obey the law in order to earn our salvation. We do not earn salvation through our obedience to the law, rather than trusting in our own efforts, rather we trust in the work that Christ did for us and we trust in a righteousness that is not our own. We trust in what someone else completely did for us. What does that mean? How does that reflect on the way that we think about salvation? Well, it crushes our pride because we understand that could never be acceptable to God in our own right. We realize that if we are Christians, God did not accept us, call us, choose us based on anything that we did, rather he accepted us completely for the sake of his beloved Son. So we do not get to trust in anything that we've done and we do not have to trust in anything we've done, rather we put all of our trust for righteousness outside of ourselves. Faith has as its object Christ outside of us rather than anything that is inside of us. We receive a perfect imputed righteousness that is no less than crediting to us the life that Christ lived knowing that God accepted his life perfectly and therefore he accepts us perfectly.

One of the amazing consequences of this, it always sounds very very bold to say this but because God has accepted Christ's righteousness on our behalf, that means we have the same right to be in heaven now that Christ himself does; because Christ deserves to be in heaven because he's fully righteous, that same righteousness is what's given to us and therefore entitles us to be in heaven in the presence of a holy God. So boasting is excluded, and as a consequence we give all of the glory, and when I say all, I mean all, every bit of the glory for our salvation goes to Christ alone because this is what he did for us as he fulfilled the law in his life. So God treats us as though we had obeyed the law like Christ did. God treats us as though we had lived the perfect life of Christ and therefore he accepts us perfectly. It's not your obedience that God accepts, but rather the

obedience of Christ on your behalf. This is one aspect of Christ's work for us and it's why we are secure in our salvation. That's why we could never lose our salvation, because the righteousness of Christ is not subject to loss or diminishment, the righteousness of Christ is perfect, it is an immovable rock, it cannot be dislodged and because his work is finished, when we trust in him that work is finished and applied on our behalf as well. What a wonderful thing to realize that God has given to us, counted to us, imputed to us a righteousness that is not our own, a righteousness that is a free gift given to those who believe in Christ.

Well, let's consider a second way that Christ has worked on our behalf and how he fulfilled the law. Jesus fulfilled the law also in his death and that's what we particularly remember here tonight, isn't it, on Good Friday. Jesus fulfilled the law in his death. Now the law requires more than perfect obedience if we can imagine just how searching that statement is. The law requires more than perfect obedience, it has a negative function as well in that it curses disobedience. The law says you must obey perfectly and it says if you don't, there is a curse upon you, and we're only going to look at one verse here in Deuteronomy 28. I invite you to turn to Deuteronomy 28 for a brief reference here. In Deuteronomy 28:15 it says this, as Moses was expounding the law to the children of Israel at that time, he said, "it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you." If you do not obey everything that the law of God says, curses will come upon you. The curse of God, the damnation of God comes upon you and as you go through the remainder of Deuteronomy 28, there is just curse after curse after curse and they are heavy and they are weighty curses that are placed upon everyone who disobeys the law of God, which is all of us. The law speaks to all of the world, silences all of our claims to any kind of obedience and makes us silent before a holy God.

Now here's the question that we have for tonight: how did Jesus fulfill that part of the law? Remember Jesus said in Matthew 5, "I have come to fulfill the law," not to abolish it but to fulfill it. Now when the law says curses upon disobedience, how did Christ fulfill that aspect of the law? That's our question for this evening. Well, as we're going to see, Jesus took the curse of the law in his own body when he died on the cross of Calvary. When he died on the cross, he satisfied the curse of the law that is upon those who disobey. Theologians sometimes call this his passive obedience. It's not a perfect term but the idea behind the term passive obedience is that Christ submitted himself to death on the cross, he voluntarily laid down his life and accepted the execution that those Roman soldiers imposed upon him, he yielded to that in order to offer his body and to offer his sinless life as the sacrifice to God to turn away the wrath of God, and the Scriptures call this and speak to this as him satisfying the curse on our behalf.

You can turn to the book of Galatians 3, if you would. Galatians 3 where we see this spelled out for us with clarity in the word of God. In Galatians 3, beginning in verse 12 it says this, it says, "the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them.'" In other words, if someone tries to justify themselves by obedience to the law of God, he's got to keep it all and sooner or later they find out that they can't do that

and that they didn't do that. But in chapter 3, verse 13 of Galatians, Paul says that biblical salvation is something different and it is based on something else. So in verse 13 he said, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree,'" that's from Deuteronomy 21, that quote. Christ became a curse for us. He accepted the curse of the law of God and suffered the punishment that our sins deserved on our behalf, he suffered that curse on our behalf as he hung on that cross at Golgotha some 2,000 years ago. He became that curse for us and that means that because the curse has been satisfied, because Christ fulfilled that curse on our behalf, we are therefore relieved from responsibility, that of the payment of that curse that otherwise would have come upon us. Christ satisfied that curse so that you and I would not have to.

He fulfilled the law by taking its curse upon sinners, and if you want to think about it in kind of rough terms in spatial terms, if this is you on my right hand here, it's as though God lifted that curse from you, took it over and placed it upon Christ on the left and punished Christ there, leaving no curse upon you, and Christ paid the curse in full and we know that he paid it in full when he cried out from the cross, "It is finished!" Everything necessary to redemption had been accomplished and God gave testimony to the world that he accepted that sacrifice by his Son, that everything about the law and all of the demands of the law for death upon those who are accounted and treated as sinners, all of that was fulfilled as shown by the fact that God raised him from the dead, Romans 1 speaks about that, that God manifested to the world that Christ has accomplished everything necessary for salvation by raising him from the dead. Romans 6 says the wages of sin is death. Christ died on our behalf. Having paid it fully and paid it righteously, God raised him from the dead to show that the wages of sin had fully been paid by his Son. And the beauty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is this, is that everyone who repents of sin and believes in Jesus Christ receives the full benefit of his perfectly obedient life, his redemptive death, and now we are joined together with him in union with his resurrection, God accepting us because of what Christ did on our behalf.

You know, for as sobering as last night's study, Jesus on hell was, here we see the grace of God answering it in full and going far beyond anything that we could have expected. Hell, real, painful and eternal. We are delivered from all of that in the Lord Jesus Christ, those of us who know him. So God – watch this – God forgives us based on the suffering that Christ went through. He accepts us as righteous based on Christ's obedience to the law. He pardons all of our sins based on the way that Christ paid the curse for us at the cross. So everything necessary for your salvation has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't add anything with your obedience, and furthermore you do not have to pay any penalty. You don't have to pay any further penalty, everything that the law requires Jesus has fulfilled on your behalf. Its righteous demands, done. Its requirements for penalty and punishment for sin, paid in full. That's the wonder of the work of Christ on our behalf.

So my friends, the law demands perfect obedience, the law curses every act of disobedience, it demands holiness, it condemns sin. You and I can't fulfill any of that, and we didn't and we never could, but Jesus did. So my friend, when Jesus speaks about

fulfilling the law, understand that this is what qualifies him to be your Savior, is that everything that the law condemns you for not doing and for doing, Christ has taken care of it all so that you can see why in Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan describes salvation as being the lifting of a burden from our back. Christ removes all of that condemnation from the law from us and frees us now to walk with God in newness of life. That's the wonder of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and I plan to speak on that more on Sunday.

So my friend, my Christian friend, let's put it this way, I'll address my fellow believers now before speaking to those of you who are not yet in Christ. I hold out hope for that God will show you mercy like he did to me many years ago. But to my Christian friends, I just want to remind you on this blessed night as we open God's word and we remember what the Lord Jesus did on our behalf, when you trusted Christ, his righteousness was imputed to you and God accepted you for the sake of his Son, and now looks upon you as having lived the perfect life of Jesus Christ. Everyone understands that you didn't but God does that as a gift that he desired to give you and that he chose you for before the beginning of time. By the same token, all of the guilt of your disobedience has been paid for in full by the Lord Jesus. God does not hold your sins against you any longer. Psalm 103:12 says this, says, "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us." Isn't that a wonderful picture? If you could stand on the top of Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs, California on a perfectly clear day and you could look out to the west and see for 100 miles or more to the horizon and probably beyond that, and then turn 180 degrees and look to the east and see 100-200 miles to the east of the flat plains of Colorado, and to realize and to have a picture there, that is a marginal picture of how far God has removed sin and its consequences from you. He doesn't hold it against you anymore. Nothing about the consequences of your sin in terms of its guilt and condemnation, nothing about it can be found near you because Christ has taken away and paid it all, and your sins have been separated from you as far as the east is from the west. They have been cast into the deepest sea and what this means is that God will not hold your sins against you when you stand before him in judgment. Scripture says elsewhere, "Their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more," by which God means he will not punish us for them, he will not hold them against us anymore, rather he accepts us freely, graciously, wondrously for the sake of his Son.

Do you see, my friends, how much Christ has done for you? Do you see how in this time of national disruption that we are living in at this moment, how far Christ exceeds that and transcends that in his majesty and his love that he has shown for us so that whatever else is happening around us, there is something greater, something more transcendent in which you can rest your hope and find the satisfaction for your soul? Do you realize that this means that the sobering terror of what we talked about last night, the reality, the pain and the eternity of hell is now something that no longer is a threat to you? That there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, Romans 8:1? That having been justified by faith, we have peace with God in our Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 5:1? Oh, we could just go on and on and on all night. We could just turn through the pages of the New Testament and see the consequences of this laid out for us again and again and again, and then we'd go to the end of the Bible in Revelation 21 and 22 and read about the great new Jerusalem and the wonder of that city that God has prepared for those of us who love

him, the wonder of the reality that even transcending the glory of heaven, what will make heaven supremely glorious is that this one who loved us and gave himself up for us will be the center of attention and we will be in the presence of the one who loved us like that, we will see him face-to-face, we will be changed from our earthly condition into conformity with the body of his glory, we will no longer even have sin residing in us. We will have a perfection of glory given to us and we will be perfectly able to see Christ in his glory, somehow we will be like him and we will be in that blessed condition of perfection forever and ever and ever, amen.

That's what Christ has done for us and 10,000 things besides. What a wonderful Savior is Jesus our Lord. This is what he's done for us. This is what his work has accomplished for us. Jesus Christ did not leave us and abandon us to our sins and the judgment they deserved. He came to earth with the specific intention and the full power and ability to save us, and he did it. He did it. By his work of obedience and by his work of sacrifice on the cross, he did everything that was necessary to save us and then he sent his Spirit and ensured that his Spirit would apply that salvation that he accomplished 2,000 years ago, the Spirit came with the full intention to make sure that you as a Christian would enter into those blessings. God left nothing to chance. He didn't leave it to your weak will to decide for Christ. If he had done that, none of us would have ever been saved. God not only accomplished salvation for us at the cross, the Spirit of God made certain that we would come. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all working together in a great unified of the one essence of God to accomplish our salvation, isn't that wonderful? Isn't that a blessed reality for us to celebrate tonight? Doesn't it make everything on earth today seem so utterly petty by comparison? Praise be to God. Praise be to God.

You know, I've sometimes pictured it this way in terms of what the work of Christ is like. Some of you don't have to imagine this, sadly, but imagine that you were greatly in debt and you had no resources to pay those debts and this debt was hanging over you. Then imagine further that a fantastically wealthy man befriends you and he finds out about your debt and he says, "I'll pay that debt completely on your behalf. My gift to you, I'll pay it in full for you." That would be wonderful, wouldn't it, to realize that all of your debt had been taken away? But imagine that the man goes further, the man goes further, this goes beyond self-promoting churches paying off a little bit of medical debt for people, this illustration goes much much further than this. This fantastically wealthy man goes in to all of his financial accounts and puts your name on it as joint owner, and he shares his wealth with you like this. You see, it's not simply that he restored you to zero and left you to yourself going forward, instead you are now a joint heir and you jointly own everything that belongs to him. Beloved, that's what Jesus Christ has done for us in salvation. He took away your sin. He paid your debt at the cross but he has gone further and he has fulfilled righteousness on your behalf and therefore has entitled you to share in all of the full, great, infinite blessings of God. That's what Ephesians 1:3 says and it praises God and it blesses his name on this account, it says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." We are joint heirs with him. Our brother in heaven has shared all of his wealth with us.

You know, I bow my head before the majesty of the wonder of such stupendous grace, the fact that he's done that for me, that he's done that for you, the infinitude of such majestic love, such magnificent grace, and to realize that Christ secured those blessings for us at the cost of great suffering on our behalf. He sacrificed for a time his glory in heaven to come to earth for us. He agreed, as it were, to go to death, even death on a cross. He felt the infinite pains of the torments that our sins deserved on the cross. Everything that we would have spent an eternity absorbing and paying and suffering, somehow it was condensed into those hours on the cross and Christ in his infinite being as God absorbed all of it and felt all of it on our behalf, not just yours individually but for everyone for whom he died. There is no way for us to understand the depth of his agony and the spiritual suffering that he endured for us. The physical suffering was one aspect of it but the spiritual suffering of it was infinite and he did it for us.

Here's the thing, there's just so much about this that just boggles our minds, that it's just too wonderful to contemplate, to understand that Jesus Christ did this voluntarily. It's what he wanted to do. He said in John 10 that he laid down his life voluntarily. No one has taken it away from him but he lays it down of his own accord. Christ did that for us. Do you realize how majestic his love is, how great his love is for sinners? There is no measuring it, and all that you and I can do as believers is fall at his feet and adore him, and worship him for his greatness and for the greatness of his love, the greatness of the salvation that he purchased for us and gaze in speechless wonder at the perfections of our great Savior, and to look forward with hope and anticipation to that day in heaven when whatever kind of crown we receive as a reward from God that he graciously gives to us for our imperfect obedience to him here on earth, and to be able to take that crown and to spin it like a frisbee at the feet of Jesus so that the reward given to us we cast at his feet in a display of worship and recognition that he's the one who purchased it all for us in the first place. I can't wait for that moment. I can't wait for that moment to give that kind of glory and that kind of gratitude to Christ and to be there with so many of you as we share in that together. That is going to be the climax of our existence and it's going to make everything on earth insignificant by comparison.

Now let me just say a word to those of you that are not yet in Christ. I want you to be there also, but even more importantly, far infinitely more important than my meager desires, I want you to understand is that Christ tonight is offering to share that with you. He is extending that offer of grace to you and calling you into that blessedness of salvation. You're a guilty sinner. There's no two ways about it. You deserve that damnation of hell that we spoke about last night. You have mocked Christ. You have been indifferent to Christ. You have tried to establish your own righteousness and not submitted yourself to the righteousness of God. You've broken every one of the 10 Commandments. Scripture says if we break one of them, it makes us a lawbreaker and he who breaks one is guilty of breaking them all, James 2.

So you're so guilty and you're so dead and you're so helpless and tonight Christ comes to you through his word and offers you the fullness of the salvation of which we have been speaking, and calls you to repent and believe in him for your salvation, to turn away from your self-righteousness, to turn away from your rebellion against God, to turn away from

your indifference to Christ and the way that you have laughed at the Gospel over so many years and considered it beneath your contempt. Now Christ comes and shows you how wrong that has been and the Spirit of God convicts you of how wrong all of that is, and Christ still after all of your rebellion is before you tonight, before you in this moment offering himself to you and calling you to himself. "Come to Me, you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Come to Me. The one who comes to Me, I will never cast out." And Christ is willing to forgive all of your sins just like he forgave all of mine, he'll forgive all of yours and give you new life if you'll just come to him. There is nothing in Christ that is unwilling to give this to you. The only unwillingness in this equation is your unwillingness before now to bend the knee to him. So in love, Christ presents himself to you and calls you and says, "The time for your rebellion, it's over. It's time for you to come for new life to Me," Christ speaking, so to speak, Christ calling you to himself.

In Isaiah 55:6 and 7, we get a sense of the nature of this call from Christ as he calls you, he calls you, my friend, watching at home, he calls you to this eternal blessings in himself. Isaiah 55:6 and 7 says this, "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon." Let me emphasize that one more time. God calls you to come to him and in his promise in which he cannot lie, he says the one that comes to him, he'll have compassion on him. You who come to him tonight, he will pardon all of your inequities and shower you with all of these blessings that I have been speaking about tonight. You can share in all of the blessings of Christ himself through this offer that is made to you and extended to you tonight, and I urge you, I call upon you to come to Christ and for you to look to Christ, to turn away from sin, turn away from self, to reject this world and embrace Christ wholeheartedly and without reservation as your Lord and your Savior, and you will enter into this abundant compassion, pardon and blessing of which Scripture speaks. But as we've been saying throughout the week, understand the consequences of this are real, the consequences of this are eternal. Death is coming. Hell is moving here, and your life is moving closer and closer to that appointed day. Oh, my friend, don't reach that day without Christ. Come to him now. Come to him today for Scripture says today is the day of salvation, and so I call upon you and beseech you, my friend, come to Christ and be saved and he will save you to the uttermost.

Let's pray together.

O Lord Jesus, how wonderful and magnificent is Your name. You are a wonderful merciful Savior. We thank You for Your work of obedience to the law both in Your life and in Your death, and we thank You that You have accomplished everything that is necessary for the eternal salvation of sinners. No one is excluded from the call. No one has sinned beyond the offer of Your grace. So we can only ask now that You would bless the word that has been so inadequately preached, bless it according to the power of Your Holy Spirit to those who need to be saved and, Father, for those of us that are in You, may our hearts be fulfilled with wonder and gratitude at the majesty of our Lord and

Savior, the wonder and majesty of what You have done on our behalf. Well might we sing, O Christ to thee, "Hallelujah, what a Savior." In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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