

Title: **CHRIST OUR SUBSTITUTE**

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Subject: *Substitution*

Introduction:

I want to pick up right where I left off this morning — 2 Corinthians 5:18. The title of my message is **CHRIST OUR SUBSTITUTE**.

(2 Corinthians 5:18-20) "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

(2 Corinthians 5:21) "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

What a profound truth, what stupendous grace, what wondrous mystery these words contain I cannot tell you. "**He,**" God the Father, "**Hath,**" in holy justice and infinite mercy, "**Made,**" by a single act at one time ordained and caused "**Him,**" the Lord Jesus Christ, his infinite, well-beloved, only begotten, immaculate Son, "**Sin,**" an awful mass of iniquity, "**For us,**" helpless, condemned, sinful rebels! From the depths of my inmost soul, I pray that the Lord will enable me, at least once, before I die, to preach the message of this text as it ought to be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. I have nothing new to say to you tonight. I will not strive to be eloquent or impressive. I want to simply explain to you, to the best of my ability, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the words of our text.

"The heart of the gospel is redemption, and the essence of redemption is the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ"

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Readings: *Joe Blakely and Merle Hart*

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(C. H. Spurgeon).

What I have to talk about tonight concerns the vital truth of the Gospel. Our text reveals the foundation truth of Christianity, the rock upon which our hopes are built. This is the only hope of the sinner, and the only joy of the true believer. I am talking about the great transaction that took place at Calvary a little more than two thousand years ago — The great substitutionary work of Christ, — the mighty transfer of sin from the sinner to the sinner’s Surety — The punishment of the Surety in the sinner’s place — The pouring out of the vials of Divine wrath, which were due to us upon the head of our Substitute.

This is the greatest transaction that ever took place upon the earth, the most marvelous sight that men ever saw and the most stupendous wonder that heaven ever executed. Jesus Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Jesus Christ, the spotless Son of God, was made sin!

Proposition: I have but one purpose in mind. I want to drive home this one glorious and awesome truth — **Jesus Christ was made sin for us.** No man living upon this earth will ever really understand this truth. Yet, I hope that we will this day be gripped by the reality of it. Oh, may God cause it to get hold of our hearts!

The doctrine of our text is the doctrine of substitution. It is the great truth of Holy Scripture. And it must be plainly declared. There are no hidden meanings in my words. The time has come for those who believe the Gospel to plainly declare it in the boldest of terms. I have set my foot down on this solid pillar of Gospel truth. And, God helping me, I never intend to be moved from it.

As I endeavor to set before you the doctrine of this text, the great and glorious doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement by our Lord Jesus Christ, I will raise and answer seven questions.

1. **Who was made sin for us?**

Our text describes our great Surety upon one point only. He was and is that One “*who knew no sin.*” The Lord Jesus Christ, our Substitute was spotless, innocent and pure. The Son of God took upon Himself human flesh and

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dwelt among men. Though He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He knew no sin.

- He had no original sin.
- He never committed an act of sin.
- He never left anything undone which ought to have been done.
- He never had any inclination to or thought of sin.
- His holy mind never produced an evil thought or desire.

It was absolutely necessary that the sinner's Substitute be without sin. If he had any guilt of sin whatsoever, he could not atone for sin.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is such a Substitute as we need. He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. He is the embodiment of purity and virtue. As a man He was made under the law, but He owed nothing to the law. Yet He perfectly fulfilled the law. He was capable of standing in the room of others, because He was under no obligations of his own. — Yet this Holy One voluntarily condescended to be made sin for us! This is amazing love and grace!

2. **Who made Christ sin for us?** — “*He*,” God the Father, made His Son sin!

- God the Father appointed Christ to be our Substitute (Job 33:24; Psa. 89:19).

(Job 33:24) “Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.”

(Psalms 89:19) “Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.”

- God the Father laid our sin upon His well-beloved Son and charged Him with our guilt (Isaiah 53:6, 10).

(Isaiah 53:6) “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

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(Isaiah 53:10) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”

- God the Father gave His Son up to die in the place of sinners (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10).

(John 3:16) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(1 John 4:10) “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

3. **When did the Lord God make His dear Son sin for us?**

- In His Eternal Decree (Isa. 53:6)

(Isaiah 53:6) “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

- At Calvary (1 Peter 2:24)

(1 Peter 2:24) “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

- In Conversion (Hebrews 9:14).

“Hebrews 9:14” “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

4. **What was done with the Lord Jesus Christ when He was made sin for us?**

Now I have come to the heart of my message. I will not even attempt to explain the text. It is beyond the reach of my mind and yours. I will simply

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remind you of this wondrous fact — “*He made him sin!*” Oh, may God the Holy Spirit now burn it into your heart and mine!

Our Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily took upon himself an intimate, infinite acquaintance with human sin.

- He took our sins and made them his very own (Psalms 40:12; 69:4-5; 7-9).

I know and rejoice in the fact of imputation. But, somehow, there is much, much more to Christ’s being made sin than the mere imputation of our sins to him. Our great, glorious Savior was made sin for us!

(Proverbs 17:15) “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both *are* abomination to the LORD.”

(Psalms 40:12) “For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.”

(Psalms 69:3-5) “I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. (4) They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away. (5) O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”

(Psalms 69:7-9) “Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. (8) I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children. (9) For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”

- He took our sins voluntarily (Psalm 40:6-8; Isaiah 50:5-7).

(Psalms 40:6-8) “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. (7) Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is*

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written of me, (8) I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.”

(Isaiah 50:5-7) “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. (6) I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. (7) For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

God almighty delivered His Son over into the hands of Divine Justice.

— He was made to suffer the fullest possible extent and extremity of God’s infinite and violent wrath. He was made to pay the just penalty of the law.

God made His Son sin! This was the soul of his sufferings. He who knew no sin was made sin.

John Gill said, “The sins of all his people were transferred unto him, laid upon him, and placed to his account. He sustained their persons and bore their sins. And having them upon him, and being chargeable with, and answerable for them, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been not only a sinner, but a mass of sin.”

The Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, suffered and died under the justice and wrath of God as the greatest sinner who ever lived. He was charged with all the sins of all His people. He was made sin for all God’s elect at once.

- He suffered shame and reproach.
- He was despised and rejected of men.
- He was forsaken by His disciples.
- He was cursed and denied by Peter.
- He was nailed to the cursed tree.
- He was mocked, railed and spit upon.
- He was forsaken by his Father!

Oh, hear that piercing cry!
What can its meaning be?
“My God! My God! Oh! Why hast Thou
In wrath forsaken me?”

It was because our sins

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On Him by God were laid;
He who Himself had never sinned,
For sinners, sin was made!

Almighty God drew forth the dreadful sword of justice and slew His Son in our place! Who can grasp what I am saying? Who can enter into its depths? I cannot understand it. I can hardly realize it. But I can and do believe it. I rest my soul upon it! — “*He hath made Him sin for us!*” I cannot preach it as I wish I could. But I can bow down and worship my glorious Surety!

5. **For whom was Christ made sin?** — “*He hath made him sin for us.*”
- Christ was made sin for ungodly, helpless sinners (Romans 5:6-8).

(Romans 5:6-8) "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

- He was made sin for His sheep, His church, His elect people.
- He was made sin for us who believe.

6. **What are the results of this mighty substitutionary Sacrifice?**

There are some sure, inevitable results arising from Christ's substitutionary sacrifice. Nothing was left to chance, or to the free-will of men. He who died at Calvary died with a specific purpose. And He will see His purpose accomplished (Isaiah 53:10-12).

(Isaiah 53:10-12) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

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- Justice was satisfied. — All the wrath, condemnation, pain and agony required by the law and justice of God for sin was fully endured by Christ.
- Sin was removed.
- The law released its claim upon God's elect.
- The righteousness of God was made ours.

These things were accomplished on the spot; and other things were guaranteed by the death of Christ.

- The death of Christ guarantees that every believer will be made perfectly righteous.
- The death of Christ guarantees the eternal salvation of all God's elect.
- The death of Christ guarantees that every soul for whom He died will enter into eternal glory.

Complete atonement Thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whate'er Thy people owed:
Nor can His wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,
And sprinkled with Thy blood.

If Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of wrath Divine:
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.

7. **Now, why was the Lord Jesus Christ made sin for us?**

There are two answers to that question.

- **He loved us!** — *“Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end!”*
- **There was no other way by which we could be saved** (Matthew 27:42).

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(Matthew 27:42) “He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.”

That is the doctrine of our text. It is the doctrine of substitution. “*He hath made him e sin for us.*” I wish I could preach it better. But I am committed to it. I intend to go on preaching it, so long as God gives me grace and life and strength to do so.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Let us worship and adore our gracious God. I hope that the substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ has become more to you than a mere point of orthodox doctrine. I have said all that I have said this morning with the desire of stirring up your hearts to worship him. I try to keep my eyes of faith continually upon that mighty transaction which took place at Calvary. I look at the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ with devout adoration. These words overwhelm me — “*He hath made him sin for us!*”

Look to Calvary, my friends, and adore the Lord our God.

- Reverently adore **the justice of God** — Sooner than tarnish His justice, God bound His Son to the cross and killed Him.
- Adore the **wisdom** of God.
- Adore the mighty **grace** of God toward us.
- Adore the infinite **holiness** of God.
- Adore the immeasurable **love** of God.

Look at the cross, and lovingly embrace the One Who died there in your place.

- Remember Who He is.
- Remember what you were.
- Remember what it cost Him to have you.

Look continually to the crucified Christ with confident, joyful, expectant faith.

- Realize the perfection of His work.
- Rest in the merits of His blood.

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- Rejoice in the pardon of sin.
- Rely upon Him alone always and for all things.

O Thou who didst Thy glory leave
Apostate sinners to retrieve
From Adam's deadly fall,
Me Thou hast purchased with a price,
Nor shall my crimes in judgment rise,
For Thou hast borne them all.

Jesus was punished in my stead,
Without the gate my Surety bled
To expiate my sin:
On earth the Godhead deign'd to dwell,
And made of infinite avail
The sufferings of the Man.

And was He for such rebels given?
He was; the incarnate King of heaven
Did for His foes expire:
Amazed, O earth, the tidings hear;
He bore that we might never bear
His Father's righteous ire.

Ye saints, the Man of Sorrows bless,
The God for your unrighteousness
Appointed to atone:
Praise Him, till with the heavenly throng,
Ye sing the never ending song,
And see Him on His throne.

One more thing I must do before I am finished — **I want to persuade everyone of you to be reconciled to God** (v. 20).

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21) “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

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How can I plead with you, reason with you and persuade you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? I preach to you and call upon you in God's stead to be reconciled to Him by faith in Christ.

God is a God of terrible wrath and justice. He will punish sin (v. 11).

(2 Corinthians 5:10-11) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. (11) Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

God is ready, willing and able to save sinners for Christ's sake.

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will effectually cleanse every believing sinner.

(1 John 1:9) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Today is the day of salvation. Do not receive the grace of God in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1-2).

(2 Corinthians 6:1-2) "We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)"

I finish my message as I began it. I send you home with these words. Oh, may God the Holy Spirit burn them into your hearts today — "*He hath made Him sin for us!*"

- This is my only hope — "*He hath made Him sin for us!*"
- *This is* my only comfort — "*He hath made Him sin for us!*"
- This is my soul's inspiration — "*He hath made Him sin for us!*"
- This is my message — "*He hath made Him sin for us!*"

Amen.