

Christ Made Sin, Men Made Righteous

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Bible Text: 2 Corinthians 5:21

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I want you to turn back this morning in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians and the fifth chapter and I am going to read one verse of Scripture, that is the 21st verse, the last verse in 2 Corinthians five.

“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.”¹

This past week I received an email, and even as I think about it I just feel a kind of unconscious shaking of my head in bewilderment, just utter amazement. In this email the individual suggested that I had altered my doctrine. And not only that, but that I could no longer find this verse to be a matter of great joy, comfort and thanksgiving. And when I read those words I thought, what self delusion.

I know of no gospel preacher who no matter what else could be said about him that if this were true he is an utter failure. He is no longer a preacher of the gospel and has no business standing before men.

Now there are two things that I am sure of. Number one is I know that that is not true. The second thing that I am sure of is I know that those of you who have heard me preach week after week for nearly 30 years, you know that that is not true, absolutely not true. Not only do I believe what is stated in that 21st verse, not only do I believe it and rejoice in it and give thanks to God of that blessed truth, the longer I live in this world and the more I see the love of so many wax cold, the more I find disappointment in man and more so in myself, the more it is the only thing I can rejoice in. It is the only truth I can find comfort and blessing in.

I can't say what this person or really any other person believes about this verse. But I know this. I believe all about it, that God has given me faith to believe. You can't believe more than God gives you faith to believe. And then also I believe all that a finite man such as myself can believe and understand about what the infinite God has made his infinite Son to be for a finite creature like me. I don't believe that the finite will ever be able to fully comprehend the infinite.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Also I believe that all that a sinner who in himself has never known anything else but sin, everything he says, does and thinks is sin. I believe all that a sinner can believe concerning as sinless one being made sin. There will always be a mystery in such things to me. And I believe what the Word of God says about it, not one thing more and certainly not one thing less.

I cannot see some mystical meaning of it beyond what God has plainly said in the Scriptures. I cannot believe it to be more than what God has been pleased to reveal. I realize was so in Paul's day and it is in every age that there are always the Gnostics, that is, these knowing ones who always seem to have a deeper, a more clear, a more advanced understanding and revelation than what we find simply given in the Scriptures. I am not one of these. I am not one of these knowing ones. And the only knowledge that I have and, in truth, the only knowledge that any believer has is that knowledge that we find given by God in the holy Scriptures. That is all we have and that is all we can believe.

And in light of that, there are five things this morning I want to say to you and to anybody who will hear this anywhere, anytime. And I will say this. If I in any way or at any point turn from these things, there are two things you can count on. Number one: I will be gone the wrong way and, number two, these things will still be true whether I believe them or not and whether or not I am found preaching them or not. These five things, I believe, will be true.

Here is the first one. I believe that Christ being made sin, I believe it to be as it was pictured in all the Old Testament types and shadows. That is, long before the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world and was made flesh and dwelt among us, God, in these Old Testament types and shadows showed us in a picture what it would be for Jesus Christ that coming Messiah and sacrifice to be made sin for his people. I believe that Christ being made sin is in the very beginning promise of the Bible.

When you go back to Genesis chapter three and verse 15 where God is talking to the devil concerning the very sin that has just now entered into this world, he makes this promise which is the very first promise of this truth when he says this to the devil.

He said, "The woman's seed, though you will bruise his heel, he will bruise your head."

And when he gave that promise, he showed us in the very fact that the woman's seed which has to be Christ, that woman's seed would be bruised and in doing so at the same time he would bruise or crush the head of sin and the serpent and Satan himself. He would be made sin for his people and being made sin he would die but not only die, but in that death he would crush and deal with the sins of his people and put them away.

Not only that, but also in the very first type and picture that we find in the Bible and it is in that which God did on that occasion after the fall when he clothed them with the skins of animals. After they had sinned and in order to cover their nakedness and in order to show in a type and be what some call the protoevangel, that is the very first one to

declare the gospel, the Scripture says, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”²

In other words, he showed that how righteousness would be accomplished, how that they would be clothed with righteousness because in the dying of those innocent animals, in their death provision was made that they might be covered of their nakedness. He showed a picture of substitution. He showed a picture of salvation by sacrifice. He showed in a picture what it would mean for Christ, the innocent one, to be made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

And then the very next type that we read about in that same opening book which is that very lamb, that very sacrifice, that their son Abel offered up to God when God refused the sacrifice of Cain which was no sacrifice and showed in that that the only way that God would be worshipped and the only way a sinner can come before God is through the slaying of this lamb which Abel offered. And the Scripture showed that God was pleased with his offering, refused Cain’s which represented man’s work and he showed, again, how it is and what it means for Jesus Christ to be made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God.

Not only that, but when you come to the time of the flood and you see Noah, the Bible says eight souls, Noah and his family being delivered through judgment which was a judgment because of sin, we find all this judgment coming against all these sinners in the world in that flood and yet here is Noah and his family and they are preserved.

But how is it that they are preserved. They are not preserved because God just favored them and unjustly and unrighteously let them escape this judgment. No, they are saved and delivered because they are in this ark which was the design of God and in that ark they are safe. They are saved because the flood is a judgment and the rain and everything that took place on that occasion, it came against the ark rather than against them. You could say that ark because it stood between them and that judgment, that ark which was a type of Christ was made sin for them and they in that ark were made the righteousness of God.

And you go all the way through this book and you find men such as Abraham there on Mount Moriah and he, at the commandment of God, has taken up his son, the Bible says, his only son by the name of Isaac. And he has taken him up on that mount and is about at God’s command to plunge a dagger in his heart and shed his blood and offer him up as a sacrifice.

And all of the sudden as he is about to do this deed, he is about to take the life of his son that he loved, God stops him and in the place of his son God commands him to go over to the thicket where there is a ram who is caught there in that thicket by his horns and there that ram is offered up in substitution for Isaac on that altar as a sacrifice to God. That lamb is made sin in a type for him that he might be made the righteousness of God.

² Genesis 3:21.

Sin, in a picture, the sins of God's people, are dealt with in that picture, in that substitute and in that ram that was slain.

You go a little bit farther in the book of Exodus. And there we find on that occasion that we call the Passover there was to be a lamb without blemish and without spot, taken, shut up and viewed to make sure it was a perfect sacrifice. And at the command of God, that lamb, for every house in those Hebrews was to be taken and slain and that blood was to be taken and sprinkled on the lintels and doorposts. And God says that God said, "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

Did that mean that judgment did not come on those households of the Hebrews when it fell on every house in Egypt and the first born in every family was killed there at the hand of almighty God? Did judgment not fall on the house of these Hebrews?

Absolutely it did. But it fell in that God appointed sacrifice. That Passover lamb was in that type and picture made to be sin for them and they were safe in their houses. The judgment of God fell on that victim and not on that first born in the household.

And then Paul comes along and taking that very type he proclaims this message. He says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."³

Everywhere you look in this book, even such things as that occasion when Moses at the command of God he did something that was, in a type, just exactly what represented... The Bible says that Moses put his hand in his garment. He stuck his hand in his coat just like this out of sight and then afterwards he pulled it out and his hand was leprous. And then, again, he took his hand, that leprous hand, he put it back in his garment again and when he took it out the Bible says it was clean.

Let me tell you what A W Pink said about that. He says, "Christ is ineffably holy in himself. He had no sin. He did no sin. He knew no sin. But in infinite grace he took our place and was made sin for us. He bare our sins in his own body on the tree and because of this he was at that time in the sight of God what the leper was, defiled and unclean not inherently so, but by imputation."

Here is Christ clean, holy. The hand is stuck in his garment. He pulls it out. It is leprous. He is made sin for us. And then, again, the Scripture says Moses put his hand back in his garment. He took it out again. What was it? It was clean because the sins that were represented in that leprous hand had been put away by the Lord Jesus. They had been imputed to Christ.

Listen to what old Robert Hawker said. He said, "In the case of the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ to his people and their sins imputed to him, the sense of imputation goes farther and ascribes to Christ and to the sinner that which each hath not."

³ 1 Corinthians 5:7.

Did you get that? He says in the imputation that we read about in this book, just as it was with Moses, just as it is in the imputation of the sins of God's people to Christ, he says, that which each hath not by the very act of imputing it to them, they have.

How does Christ have any sins? How is he made sin? By the imputing of the sins of all his people to them. How are they made righteous? By the imputing of Christ's righteousness to them. They each one in that have that which they inherently do not have in themselves.

He knew no sin. Just like you and I know no righteousness.

Do we understand that?

And in one of the greatest types that you can find in all of the Old Testament, if you will turn to Leviticus and the 16th chapter, that which we find taking place in the sin offering on the day of atonement pictures this very thing so clearly. Look here in Leviticus 16 and verse seven.

Aaron the priest is commanded of God to take two goats. Isn't it amazing what God uses to show us what sin is, to show us who it is that he is saving, to show us the only way that you and I could ever be saved. It is not a pretty picture.

And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.⁴

Why has it got to be one lot for the Lord, one goat for the Lord? Because this is always the chief thing in salvation. God must be satisfied.

Brother Scott Richardson more years ago than I can hardly remember, he always said it like this. He said, "Before God can do anything for you, he has got to do something for himself."

Whenever Abraham was about to take Isaac up and Isaac asked him where was the sacrifice. He said, "The Lord will provide himself a sacrifice."

And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.⁵

Now we misuse this term scapegoat in our day, because the scapegoat, he was allowed and even taken by the hand of a fit man and led out into the wilderness and he was to

⁴ Leviticus 16:7-8.

⁵ Leviticus 16:9-10.

make sure that that scapegoat went free because justice had been satisfied, because the Lord's goat had been slain.

Do you remember what Christ said when those men came to get him in the garden? He said, "You looking for me?"

They said, "Yes, we are looking for Jesus of Nazareth."

He said, "If you take me, these have got to go free."

Why? Because he was being made sin that they might be made righteous before God, that they might be set free. That is the exact picture here.

Look down in verse 20.

It says, "And when he hath made an end of reconciling..."⁶

Isn't that the same word that we find over there in 2 Corinthians five that we just read?

And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.⁷

What happened to the iniquities, the sins of those Israelites in this picture? Well, the priest he went and laying his hands on the head of that scapegoat, he confessed, he in this picture laid on him, imputed to him, this innocent victim, he laid on him, confessed on him all the iniquity, all the transgressions of those Israelites.

What was that a picture of? Christ being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God. You see, those two goats are really just one. But they picture that work that is Godward first and then manwards, that pictures Christ being made sin and that he in that role suffered. He is the one that all these things represent whether it is the Old Testament priest or the sacrifices or the offering, they all speak to this very thing. Christ and him crucified. I believe every one of them.

I see it is a clear picture. That is Christ. That is him being made sin. That is him suffering. The result of it is that we like those Hebrews and whoever the offerer was, are made the righteousness of God.

⁶ Leviticus 16:20.

⁷ Leviticus 16:20-22.

Here is the second thing. I believe Christ being made sin to be as God said it was through plain statements in the Old Testament. I don't really see anything complicated about it. If you turn over to Isaiah 53 I don't believe that there are too many. Somebody may get some real fresh light. I am always scared of this fresh light. But somebody may get some fresh light, but I don't think you will find it any clearer than in Isaiah 53 where the prophet is speaking of the Messiah. He is speaking of God's Christ and he is speaking of him in his character as the Mediator and Savior and Redeemer and Sanctifier and substitute of his people.

Isaiah 53 verse four.

“Surely he hath borne...”⁸

Now that has got an e on it, B O R N E. I am not a learned man, but I believe that means to carry something, is that not right? Especially in the old English. He has borne a heavy load, all right? Here it is. This is the Christ.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions.”⁹

He was made sin.

“He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”¹⁰

What did he do? The Lord laid on Christ... actually it means something like made to meet together on his head the iniquity of us all. Who is that? God's elect, all of his sheep. That is a plain statement of the Old Testament before Christ came. It is spoken of as a done deal, as an accomplished thing in the mind and purpose of God. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Blessed is the man, Paul says, to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

What did he do with it? He laid them on Christ.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.”¹¹

Always coming back to this thought of sacrifice. He says, “He was brought as lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.”¹²

⁸ Isaiah 53:4.

⁹ Isaiah 53:4-5.

¹⁰ Isaiah 53:5-6.

¹¹ Isaiah 53:7.

¹² Ibid.

Willingly, obediently to God.

“He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”¹³

Why did Christ die? What is it fro him to be made sin by God? It is for the transgressions of God’s people that he was stricken, smitten and afflicted by God himself.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 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. 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. 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.¹⁴

You know when the Spirit of God opens our eyes which means he brings us to a willingness to believe what God clearly and plainly says in his Word it is easy to believe. You see, our problem is not in this business of not realizing what God said. It is in that natural rebellion against what God said. You can’t read that chapter with those plain statements which just every verse rings out with this very truth and substance and essence of just what Paul states in verse 21 that we read in 2 Corinthians five. Every verse says this. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. It is everywhere substitution. It is everywhere it imputation. It is everywhere God holding the surety accountable for the sins of his people. That is the very substance of that verse.

Old John Gill he said, “God the Father against whom we have sinned from whom we have turned and whose justice must be satisfied, he has laid on Christ, his own Son, the sins of all his elect ones which are, as it were, collected together and made one bundle and burden of and therefore expressed in the singular number, iniquity, and laid on Christ and were bore by him even all the sins of all God’s elect, a heavy burden is this which none but the mighty God could bear and this was typified by laying of hands and laying of sins upon sacrifice and putting the iniquities of Israel upon the head of the scapegoat by whom they were bore and carried away. These words may be rendered, “He made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all, the elect of God as they live in every part of the world. They are meeting in Christ. Their sins are represented as coming from all quarters, east and west and north and south and as meeting in Christ as they did when he suffered as their representative on the cross. For almost like this,” he said, “he made to rush or fall upon him the iniquity of us all. Our sins like a large and mighty army beset him around

¹³ Isaiah 53:8.

¹⁴ Isaiah 53:9-12.

and fell upon him in a hostile manner and were the cause of his death by which means the law and justice of God had full satisfaction and our recovery from ruin and destruction is procured which otherwise must have been the consequence of turning to our own way.”

Everywhere you look, every worthwhile commentator on Scripture shows the dying of Jesus Christ to be this satisfaction of God. And men have railed over the years against what they call a mercantile redemption. They said it is just like a matter of business for you folks.

No, it is a matter of business with God. He said to satisfy the law and justice of God. Yes, it is legal. But that is exactly what suretyship is about, is it not? I will tell you this. Solomon warned. He said, “You had better be careful. You be surety for somebody, because you are going to smart for it.”

Christ has been responsible for the sins of God’s elect since before the world began. That is why God says, “I am just God and a Savior.”

Well, if he is not a just God, we can throw out all these legal terms and ramifications. What is justification? But as somebody said, a forensic term, a term of the court whereby we are declared by the court of heaven as righteous in Christ.

Let me ask you this. When you have to pay a bill, I mean, one of those humdinger bills, when you have to reach down and pick up your pen and put that pen to your check pad and you write it out and you know it has in that stroke sucked out every penny almost in your account, is that real?

I tell you what. It feels pretty real to me.

Let me ask. When a man before the courts is found guilty of a capital crime and he is sentenced to death, legally sentenced by justice to death, when they take him out, when justice, which is what that man is that goes against him that morning, when he takes him out to that... of that cell and marches him down to the death chamber, when they pull that switch on him if he is electrocuted or if they turn on that gas and it consumes him and he is gassed or when he is injected by that which is surely to kill him, is that real? You can bet on this. Christ’s suffering in this legal satisfaction before God’s justice is real. Don’t tell me it is not. It wouldn’t be real if it was not real, if it didn’t satisfy the claims of God.

Daniel said, “After three score and two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.”

Christ didn’t die for himself. He didn’t die because of his sins. Then he must have died for somebody else’s sins. That is what a substitute does.

Zechariah has stated it so clearly. He said, this is God saying it, “Awake, O sword.”¹⁵

¹⁵ Zechariah 13:7.

I wrote that hymn this week and talked about Christ falling under the justice blade. That is foreign in our generation, isn't it? Not foreign to the Bible. Zechariah said the almighty God would make this statement.

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd.”¹⁶

When the sword of justice, divine, holy, legal justice, when it fell on Christ that was real. That was real.

Old John Brown he said, “The whole of salvation by Christ crucified is a mystery. The imputation of our sins to him, the infliction of the punishment due to us upon him and our discharge from guilt on account thereof, the justification of our persons by his obedience are precious truths, but very wonderful and mysterious. Natural men though ever so much improved in knowledge, esteem them irrationable and unintelligible notions.”

Thirdly, I believe Christ's being made sin to be as we find it in all the events we find in the four gospels. That day that the prophet spoke of, that sacrifice that all those sacrifices talked of, it came. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we find in those four gospel accounts there in the New Testament Scriptures Christ being tested and shown to be without sin all his life. We find him hated without a cause, confessed by Pilate to have no fault at all, accused we find him tried and condemned without any proof of crime or sin against him and put to death, actually as a man put to death outside of Jerusalem on a cross. That is a fact.

And just like every attempt to rewrite every other bit of history in this world, it seems like, though there be an attempt to rewrite this history, it is going to stand.

I saw a man wearing a t-shirt the other day. He said, “I would rather be historically accurate than politically correct.”

That is the way I feel about the gospel. I would rather be accurate with this history about Jesus Christ as a man, the God man coming into this world and suffering the death that we find in Scripture of the cross outside of Jerusalem being crucified in the perfect fulfillment of all that the prophets and types said concerning him. Is that what we find?

Turn over to Luke's gospel chapter 24. Luke's gospel chapter 24 and look down at verse 25. This is after his resurrection. It says that he says to these men and women, after he is raised up from the dead, “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Luke 24:25.

Now what did the prophet speak? They surely didn't say he was going to come and take an earthly throne and be an earthly [?], deliver them from all their enemies and... that is not what the prophets were talking about.

Who were the prophets talking about? He says, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?"¹⁸

He is saying, "This death that I have just died, this suffering that I have just endured, is just what they were talking about."

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"¹⁹

My friends, his sufferings are his glory.

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."²⁰

He tied everything in, in those sufferings shown in type and word in the Old Testament Scriptures to the very events that had unfolded before their eyes there in those gospel accounts that we have the record and history of.

He says, "They were all talking about me and that which has happened to me has happened just like they said it would."

You see, the four gospels record the very events of Christ being made sin for us. And even from his cross we hear his words as the substitute. We read of his incarnation, of his being that Word that was made flesh. We hear of his life and his teaching and his final days on the earth and his death and his resurrection from the dead and we hear of his doctrine. It was the same thing.

He said, "I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for the sheep."

He could have said it just as easily, "I will be made sin for the sheep, that these sheep might be made the righteousness of God in me."

"I have a cup to drink. I have a baptism to be baptized with."

One of the apostles said, "I am ready to be baptized in that same baptism."

No, no. No, no. This is the winepress of God's wrath and God's Christ has to tread it alone. God is laid help for his people on one that is mighty.

The Bible says that when he is transfigured there on the mount of transfiguration the

¹⁸ Luke 24:26.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Luke 24:27.

apostles Peter, James and John they see him. What is he doing? He is talking with Moses and Elijah. He is talking with these two men who represent the law and the prophets and they were talking about his decease, his exodus which he would accomplish at Jerusalem.

You see, Christ being made sin is an accomplishment, a success. But I have got to hurry.

Fourthly, I believe Christ being made sin to be as the apostles stated in their doctrine and as their doctrine and gospel.

After Christ ascended back into heaven and we find the real ministry of those apostles really taking a public state there in the book of Acts, Peter stands to preach on the day of Pentecost. And he says of Christ, he says, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”²¹

First sermon. Wait till you are endued with power, 50 days. That is what Pentecost means, 50 days. He stands up.

How are we going to know whether or not Peter has been endued with power at this time? Because he tells the truth of God, because he tells of Christ being made sin according to God’s will and determinate counsel and purpose from all eternity and yet at the same time showing that this responsibility shall be on the hands of those who slew him.

This was Paul’s doctrine. He said to the Ephesians—and I could give hundreds of examples of Paul—the one we just read in verse 21 he says also in Ephesians five he says, “Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.”²²

He didn’t just say, “Follow Christ’s example.” He didn’t say, “Just learn his teachings.” He didn’t just say, “Follow his doctrine.” He said, “He has given himself as a sacrifice for us. He is made sin for us.”

He is saying, Romans five, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one...”²³

That actually says, “by the one obedient act of one the many were made righteous.”

What act of obedience was that? Paul says in Ephesians when he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

²¹ Acts 2:23.

²² Ephesians 5:2.

²³ Romans 5:19.

You mark this down. It is not Christ's obedience unto the law of Moses that saves us, though by his obedience to that it does show him a perfect sacrifice. But it is by this one act of obedience that we are made righteous and that is that death of the cross.

This was Peter's gospel. He said, "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."²⁴

And all through the writings of the Spirit of God on the hand that wrote the book of Hebrews he says, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."²⁵

The what? The offering of the body, the perfect body of Jesus Christ.

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."²⁶

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."²⁷

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."²⁸

And then, number five.

I believe Christ being made sin to be just exactly what God says it is in our verse. The first thing I see here is this. This is something God has done.

"For he..."

Who has he been talking about here? What God has done.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."²⁹

All things are of God.

"For he..."

²⁴ 1 Peter 2:24.

²⁵ Hebrews 10:10.

²⁶ Hebrews 10:12.

²⁷ Hebrews 10:10.

²⁸ Hebrews 9:12.

²⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:19.

Something that God has done. This, as I said, is an act of God in history. You are looking for something now. You are looking too close at hand. You have got to look back.

Somebody said, "Faith is believing that God will do what he says he will do."

Hold on just a minute. That is true. But first, true faith believes that God has done what he says he has done. And if he hasn't done what he says he has done, then you need to be confident that he will do what he say she will do.

"For God..."

He did it in eternity certainly in that everlasting covenant. Christ is described as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He did it on the cross in time in the body of his Son. And that is what he declares in the gospel.

"For he hath made him..."³⁰

Who is that? Christ, the God man, that man that walked here on this earth lived without... He has made him in this determining counsel and will and purpose of God, he has made Christ who knew no sin.

Why is that important? Because a sinner cannot die for a sinner. He just can't. Everything that pointed and pictured Christ being made sin, what did he say? It has got to be without limit. It has to be perfect to be accepted. And you watch as the priest steps out on that day of atonement and he takes that goat upon which he will now... well, let's [?] the goat.

Takes the goat by which he will slay him, the one that the Lord's lot fell on or whether it is the goat whereby he will confess the iniquities of those Israelites, whether it is, it doesn't matter. I don't see where he goes and goes somewhere and takes maybe like a handful of pitch, you know, black pitch. Now we have got to make sure he is really type of being made sin so we are just going to rub it all over him, grime him up and make him to be black and ugly and filthy and this... we will take a bucket out of the cesspool and pour over him and all that kind of stuff.

Do you see anything like that going on? No, sir. Why? Because God's Christ knew no sin.

As that old writer said, "It was not inherently in him. It was never found in any motive in him or in any deed done by him or in any word spoken by him. He knew no sin."

You and I don't know anything but sin and he knew no sin. Perfect.

³⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:21.

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”³¹

Peter said he is the one “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”³²

Hebrews, “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”³³

You can’t get around that. That is like a big sore thumb. I mean, it is just going to be there those statements again and again and again and again. He knew no sin.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us.”³⁴

Now those words “to be” are as, as they often are in the King James Version, in italics which means they were added. So what it says is this one who knew no sin by God was made sin.

Now how do we know that? Number one, because God said it, because God said it. This one who knew no sin was made sin. God said he was. God being who he is, holy and just, obviously he was bearing somebody’s else’s sin. God said it.

But, secondly, we know it because... well, let me say it like this. We know what it is to be made sin in this sense because Christ himself expressed it. What is it to be made sin? It is to be separated from God. He is hanging there on that cross. And the Bible says that three hours of darkness shrouded this transaction.

Evidently you and I aren’t going to find out every detail of it, nor could we, for want of the faculties and capacity to do so. Three hours of darkness falls on the land as Christ hangs on that cross to show us that this transaction is between God and his Son. God makes him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Nothing but darkness.

So what does it mean to be made sin? It means to be separated from God. He cries out of that darkness, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”³⁵

Somebody said, “God forsaking God?”

When the sins of his people are laid to his charge and the day comes for the surety to pay up, what is the price? Separation from God. He didn’t say that because he didn’t know.

³¹ Hebrews 4:15.

³² 1 Peter 2:22.

³³ Hebrews 7:26.

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:21.

³⁵ Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.

He didn't say it because he wanted God to answer him. He said that so that you and I would know.

But, thirdly, and what it means most of all for one who knew no sin to be made sin, it means he died. And he died no ordinary death. He died what is described as the death of the cross. Here is the God man, God manifest in the flesh and God as God could do everything from the throne of heaven that we need done for us except the one thing we need most of all and that is somebody to pay our sin debt, somebody to do that which is required because of our sin.

What is that? To die.

You see, all these sacrifices and offerings offered up, you wouldn't have of them, so a body thou hast prepared for me.

Did you notice in all the verses that I have... so many of them I have read this morning said by the offering of his body once? All those Old Testament types and pictures, what did they all have in common? Though they had various creatures and persons, whatever it is, they all had one thing in common. They are all associated with death. They all died.

When you and I first confessed Christ, how do we do it? By picturing his death. When we gather around the Lord's table and have the Lord's supper what do we gather around? His death. That is what it is to be made sin. It is for this sin's substitute and representative of all God's elect to be dealt with by God in their place and to die what is required for all who sin against him and that is to die.

Why does he die? Because the wages of sin is death, because the soul that sins shall surely die.

If you think you are such a good fellow or such a good gal that God could in dealing with you and saving you do less than that, you are sadly mistaken. We are such vile, wretched sinners in the sight of a holy and a just God, that the only way that could be made for us to be saved is for God himself to clothe himself in human flesh and in our nature come into this world to die.

Talk about what a good person you are. You are a vile wretch and if it weren't for the grace of God and the death of Christ you would be eternally separated from God in hell forever.

If he hasn't been made sin for you, this sinless one and died this death of the cross, you would perish.

You see, every believer is brought to take these pronouns that are in our verse and replace them with the true individuals.

For God hath made Christ sin for Gary Shepherd. Christ who knew no sin that Gary Shepherd might be made the righteousness of God in Christ.

That is doctrine, but it is not just a doctrine. It is life. It is life. Paul says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."³⁶

What does it mean to be made sin? It means to be made a curse for us. What does that mean?

"For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."³⁷

Peter, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."³⁸

Life through his death, that is what this gospel is about and that is what this verse is about.

Paul said:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.³⁹

You see, justice satisfied in Christ is salvation. What a verse.

Not believe this? Not rejoice in this? This is my only hope. This is the heart of the gospel. This is Christ crucified. God did something in his Son in order to make his people righteous.

"...made the righteousness of God by him."

No. In him.

I think it was old Owen or somebody said, "There is not one shred of righteousness in this world except that which is set forth in Christ in the gospel in him."

You see, a lot of people seem to indicate that something in the work of Christ and then the work of the Spirit enables us to be righteous. But if I could be righteous I wouldn't have needed him to die and my dying in him so that I might be made the righteousness of God in him.

If I ever find any in myself, I am in trouble.

³⁶ Galatians 3:13.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ 1 Peter 3:18.

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

What anyone believes that I believe doesn't change what I believe. What anybody says I preach doesn't change what I preach. I am like Paul and I think most here know it.

“I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”⁴⁰

What anybody says about me doesn't change me. If I am in him but it may say a lot about them.

I believe this. Do you believe it? If you don't, I hope God will enable you to believe it. I pray you will. I pray that he will bind my wandering heart to him in this very thing.

Father, this day I thank you for your amazing grace. I know there are many who can preach your gospel better than I can, but I know they can't preach a better gospel than the one that you have set forth all throughout this book, all of which these things say the same thing you say in this one verse. You know our hearts. Bring us to believe this truth, to look to Christ. Cast off all hope in self. Decease from doing things that would distract from Christ. Bless your Word to our hearts for we pray and ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 2:2.