

JESUS CHRIST
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EVERYTHING

Updated and Revised Edition

“For I decided to know ***nothing*** among you except ***Jesus Christ*** and
Him crucified.”

1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV)

©2017 Dr Shawn Smith

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Throughout this book, the author capitalises certain pronouns in scripture that refer to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Hebrew and Greek words have been italicized and embolden. Except otherwise indicated, all references are taken from the 'King James Version'

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Gospel of Christ Ministries

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Dedication:

I dedicate this book to the Smith family's consecration to the
Eternal heart of the Triune Godhead in spreading the Gospel of
Christ to all men in this generation and the next.

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Christ without Religion

"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." ESV

"For after weighing the issues, it is my secret determination to concentrate entirely on Jesus Christ himself and the fact of his death on the cross." Phi

"I refuse to know nothing with certainty other than the reality that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Liberating King, who was crucified on our behalf." The Voice

1 Corinthians 2:2

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures," ESV

"The first thing I did was place before you what was placed so emphatically before me: that the Messiah died for our sins, exactly as Scripture tells it; that he was buried; that he was raised from death on the third day, again exactly as Scripture says;" MSG

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

A wise man has once said, “No one has the right to hear the Gospel twice until everyone has at least heard the Gospel once.” His statement is true and worthy of commendation. But the question that I dare to ask is the following: how many who profess to be Christians have even heard the Gospel even once?

What if I were to tell you that the Gospel, which is the “almost too-good-to-be-true news” was the best news you never heard?! It is only when the Gospel is expounded to reveal Christ in the quality of grace that is as pure as the very nature of God that we can certify in reality to have come in contact with the power that makes Christianity revolutionary. The Gospel is the glad message of good things. In case you did not know, joy is serious business to God. The reason why so many Christians have so little joy in their hearts is that they have so little Gospel in their minds.

Two thousand years ago, God chose a man and appointed him as an apostle to explain the Gospel to this present Church Age. This man who simply referred to himself as ‘a man in Christ’ received his message directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. This message, this Gospel, is not speculation but divine truth.

“10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 1:10-12

This almost ‘too-good-to-be-true news’ of Jesus Christ known as the Gospel is what I will be expounding to you. It is not what I think; it is what I know. When the Holy Spirit breathes upon the Gospel, it seems so simple that children can understand it, yet it is so profound that studies by the wisest theologians have never exhausted its riches in the past two thousand years. This ‘simplicity’ is that Christ is the all-sufficiency of the Gospel. He has done for us what we are definitely unable to do for ourselves.

The crux of the matter is found in what happened at the cross which is the place in salvation history where humanity was reconciled to God once and for all.

“20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you,

that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled”

Colossians 1:20-21

No man can claim to understand the Gospel unless he has clearly seen what transpired there. The cross is not only where Christ died for you, it is where Christ introduces you to the death of the old man, and it is where He took care of everything that was wrong with you. This is the principle of identification whereby Christ became what you were to make you what He is in Himself.

The Apostle Paul determined beforehand that the emphasis of his ministry was Christ and Him crucified. He judged it best, after weighing the odds, that the most pivotal truth a person could be exposed to is the essential understanding of what really happened at the cross. The only way you can know the Glorified Christ is to first know Him as the Crucified Christ.

The reason for such an emphasis is that the value of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ offered at the cross is so high, and His merit so extensive, that its worth is equal to completely eradicate all the sin of the human race. But its benefits, once revealed, are only effective for believers although they are accrue to all men.

“10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”

1Timothy 4:10

It is remarkable to note that Christianity has chosen the cross as the emblem to represent it; yet the full implications of what happened there remain the most unknown aspect of the Gospel. The Gospel is intricately related with what Christ did for you at the cross. In it the genius of God is revealed in that Christ became exactly what you were in spirit, soul and body so that God viewed Him as being you. At the cross, Christ was identified and treated as you, all conditions and qualities taken into consideration, and what He did there has been accredited into your account and attributed as yours.

The Gospel is intricately related with what Christ did for you at the cross.

When I speak of the cross of Christ, I am not necessarily referring to the wooden beams used by the Romans as an instrument of execution. I am speaking about what the cross truly stands for, all that was accomplished through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God who became Son of man. I focus on His recapitulation including everything that gave meaning to that loving act. Nothing else is of

equal importance in the eyes of God and ultimately to mankind, for the work of Jesus Christ at the cross is the wisdom of God manifested.

The Lord Jesus Christ has never done anything half way. He has always completed everything that He set Himself out to do. Nothing can be added to what He has already done for you: it is a finished work, it is a done deal, it is a completed task and an accomplished fact.

It is my concern to explain the nature of salvation with the ancient saying: “the unassumed is the unhealed”. It is for us and our salvation that the Son of God became fully human, exactly what we were, identifying with us in every aspect of our humanity, taking our place and reconciling us.

It is due to the full assumption of our humanity that the entire work of redemption is complete and what happened at the cross is sufficient for all and efficient for whosoever believes. It is in the cross of Christ that God’s plan of salvation stands sure and certain, secured and freely granted to all who accept it.

If this be true, as most absolutely is the case, then God depends uniquely on His Son and what He did on the cross in His death and subsequent resurrection to provide and grant you His

salvation. God relies on the faithfulness of His Son for His plan and not on the sinner or what he can do. This is the marvel of the ages that distinguishes Christianity from every other religion and makes the Gospel unparalleled to any ideology of man.

If these statements seem almost too good to be true, it is simply because it is the Gospel. The Gospel frees us from the pressure to perform, it liberates from the slavish demand of religion, which is the “do-in-order-to-be paradigm”.

The Proper Distinction between Religion and the Gospel

“Now if a man earns his pay by his work, it is not counted to him as a favour but it is paid to him as a debt.” MON

“Now to one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due.” RSV

“Now to a labourer, his wages are not counted as a favour or a gift, but as an obligation (something owed to him).” AMP

“If you’re a hard worker and do a good job, you deserve your pay; we don’t call your wages a gift.” MSG

“Now when you work a job, do your wages come as a gift or as compensation for your work? It is most certainly not a gift – you are only paid what you have earned.” The Voice

Romans 4:4

Religion is the anti-thesis of the Gospel. It is the invention of man and no matter what its creed, tenet or label may be, it is basically man's vain attempt to secure the favour and approbation of God by a system of merit established on works. These are the varieties of rule-based religions which we are all acquainted with.

No matter the name of the religion, the focus as well as the pressure to perform is on you: what you should do or not do and how often you should do it or not. Religion places man under the obligation of trying to pay his dues to God in order to earn salvation. Its *modus operandi* is “do good and God is glad, do bad and God is mad”

Religion operates out of performance which makes the attempt of placing God in man's debt due to good works. The utter failure of such a system is that God will never be indebted to any man. When God gives, He gives and refuses to allow His gifts to be paid for; for no one has ever been qualified to pay the price in the first place.

The harder you work for salvation in religion, the greater you go into debt. It leads to pride when you succeed and to despair when you fail. It ultimately leads to slavery either way because it becomes all about you and what you must do to establish your standing before God. In the end, it leaves you either robbed of all spiritual initiative due to your failures or deluded into thinking that you have established for yourself a position before God by your temporary successes.

In the collection of all varieties of religion, God is presented as relating with the adherent through a meritorious system. Your deeds are weighed in God's scales and He evaluates your merits. The Gospel is grace to the undeserving. The God and Father of Jesus Christ does not relate with you through scales but through the cross. Which will it be: the scales of religion or the cross of Christ?

***Religion is the
antithesis of the
Gospel***

There are basically two options in the world, two systems. One is based on human achievement and the other is based on divine accomplishment; one says you must earn your salvation by your own works, the other says salvation is a gift fully secured without your merit. One involves achieving by trying; the other involves believing by trusting. One involves staking your life, personal wellbeing and eternal destiny on yourself and your

capacity to perform. The other involves unreservedly staking your life and eternal destiny on the perfection of Jesus Christ. These two options are diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive. They are unable to both be true at the same time; they are incompatible and can never meet. Which of the two will you receive?

The Gospel of Christ is Not about a Religion

“That is God was in Christ making peace between the world and himself, no longer holding men’s misdeeds against them and has now given to us the preaching of this news of peace.” BAS

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, reckoning their sins no more against them, and having ordained me to speak the word of reconciliation” Con

2 Corinthians 5:19

The Gospel of Christ is the proclamation of the end of religion not the arrival of a new religion. The cross of Christ indicates that man does not need to try to gain God’s approval by his own efforts but that God has sought for sinful man by reconciling him to Himself through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. God solved all the world’s problems without requiring a single person to do a single thing.

Religion consists of everything that man thought that he had to do in order to become right with God and find peace with Him. Since time immemorial, the fallen creature known as *Homo sapiens* became *Homo religiosus* and has sought to invent ways to appease his own defiled conscience and his angry God.

Religion is a game that man plays in trying to prove to God and to his fellow man how important he is. Religion in itself is of all games the most universally played, but it is the only game where no one wins no matter how well they perform. What people have failed to realise over the ages is that one may have tons of religion without an ounce of the genuine experience of salvation and without the slightest notion of the one true living God. Sincerity can never be a substitute for truth. It is possible to be sincere yet wrong. History abounds with examples of men who did the greatest of wrongs with the best intentions. There are multitudes of good men and women in this world with the most noble of intentions who are sincerely wrong.

The Gospel makes two clear statements that render the complex systems of religion obsolete: first, no one in history through their own efforts has ever succeeded to make themselves right before God; second, everything that religion has tried and

failed to do has been perfectly done once and for all by Jesus Christ, namely our perfect acceptance (Eph. 1:6).

The Gospel truth is that God loves you not because of what you do but because of who He is. Who you are in the eyes of God has nothing to do with you, but everything to do with the person of Christ and what He has done with and for you. The mark of the true Gospel is that Christ is everything and the fallen creature is nothing, but due to salvation which is all of grace, the believer becomes a son of God who is everything because of Christ who is everything.

Identity surpasses performance. The Gospel is not the exposition of what you are to do; it is the revelation of who you are in Christ irrespective of what you do because of what Christ has already done. Who you are to the Father is firmly anchored in Christ's accomplishments; your identity is established in His substitution for you and representation as you, and not on yourself.

“20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20

Jesus Christ has fulfilled all for you to live the life of blessing beyond measure. He has qualified you to be who God ordained you to be. His unconditional love demonstrated in His death for you at the cross proclaims that you are of inestimable worth.

Stop looking for a new regimen of rules and regulations to keep. Jesus Christ did not come to refurbish or reform religion; He came to bestow on you His own eternal relationship with His Father, and His own Life to keep you.

The Gospel of Christ reveals the only belief system that can scandalously boast that you are no longer seeking, but have confidently found what everyone else is still ignorantly searching for. Do you want to know what you have found and how you found it? The Father found you because He chose you and made you His own and you have found in that Father the One who claims you as His son forever. As a believer in Jesus Christ, you have all of God. What an “arrogant” boast, for above all you did absolutely nothing to receive such a position. That is why it is called grace, and that is why it will remain the stumbling block of the ages.

There are few things quiet so boring as being religious! It is trying to live the quality of life you do not have, substituting Christianity for Christ, religion for reality. Man was created by

design to be indwelt by God, indispensable to his humanity. Christ gave Himself for us, to give Himself to us that we may have God's own Life!

The secret of experiencing the goodness of God is simply the good news. So many people think that we actually need to keep hearing more of what we need to do for God. The reality is that we need to keep hearing more of what God has already done for us in Christ!

Almost Too Good To Be True

“...not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

“...Are you unmindful or actually ignorant [of the fact] that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repent (to change your mind and inner man to accept God's will)?” AMP

Romans 2:4

The Gospel is bigger and better than what you think. The Gospel cannot be preached and heard enough, for it cannot be grasped enough. The sign of the spiritual vitality of the

***The Gospel is the
“too-good-to-be-true” news.***

believer is how amazed they are at God's grace. It is the litmus test of one's grasp of the Gospel.

The term "Gospel" is translated from the Greek word "*euangelion*" which is literally translated to mean "almost too good to be true news". The term was coined in the first century to describe the extreme goodness of the God depicted in the Gospel. To the philosophical Greek minds of the first century, the goodness of God explained in the Gospel was an exaggeration that would exhaust the human intellect to grasp. They were exactly right! If what you have been hearing does not seem to be almost too good to be true, it is probably not the Gospel.

The goodness of the good news is directly proportional to the goodness of God. The newsworthiness of the good news is directly related to the revelation it gives us of Him. Since God is infinitely good, there is always more for us to see in Him. The Gospel unveils and unfolds to us the heart of God in Christ so that we can know Him as He really is.

The Image of the Invisible God

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power,

when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

*"He is the sole expression of the glory of God [the Light-being, the out-
raying or radiance of the divine], and He is the perfect imprint and
very image of [God's] nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding
and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power. When He
had by offering Himself accomplished our cleansing of sins and
riddance of guilt, He sat down at the right hand of the divine Majesty
on high," AMP*

Hebrews 1:3

Multitudes claim to worship and serve the one true and Living God without really knowing Him. There is a fact about the God revealed in Christ that is unparalleled: it is His humility. In no other religion do we have a god who condescends and stoops down to a less dignified level to waive the privileges of His rank.

The gods of human imagination are indifferent towards the human race and demand their adherents to suffer for them, making sacrifices even to death in order to appease them. The one true living God – although self-sufficient – is neither self-centred nor solely a receiver, but a Giver, the Ultimate Giver. He thoroughly despises the idea of being untouchable and so humbled Himself to

suffer an unconditionally give His Life as a perfect sacrifice in order that we may be blessed by being joined to Him in an inseparable union, and know what is true and perfect happiness.

Man was created in the image of God, but when he fell, he wanted to return the favour and created a god in his own image. When you try to reduce the things of God to fit the rationale of the mind of man, unbelief and religion are always the result. But once you submit the mind of man to the things of God, it expands to perceive the invisible; we can see God as He really is. Varied philosophies have been presented throughout human history by various minds but Jesus Christ brought and imparted life.

No other religion has ever claimed that its historically founder is the supreme and only deity, nor has any other religion dared to even suggest that the one true God loves us to the extent of becoming one of us in order to die for us. This is the glory and beauty that the Gospel reveals; because God is just, there had to be the extraction of sin (Heb. 1:3).

God is love. He was willing to make the reconciliation in the Person of His own Son. The cross is the master key that unlocks to us the Father's heart; for it is there that we see His unconditional love demonstrated, in the public notice of the death of Christ.

We know what God is like now, for He has revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ. God is Christ-like! I know nothing higher of God than to say that He is Christ like. Do not think it

*In Christ the
invisible God was
made visible*

is strange when I say this of the Man that walked among us. I am saying that when we think of God, we must think of Him in terms of this Man. I will prove it to you: You may transfer every single moral quality in Jesus to God without any loss or degradation to your thought of God. On the contrary, thinking of God in any other terms lowers and impoverishes your concept of Him. I know no other God except the Man Christ Jesus.

Christ is the Proof of God's Love

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

“Yet the proof of God's amazing love is this: that it was while we were sinners that Christ died for us” Phi

“But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.” MSG

“Think about this: while we were wasting our lives in sin, God revealed His powerful love to us in a tangible display; the Anointed One died for us.” The Voice

Romans 5:8

Love is not merely a characteristic or a trait that may be attributed to God amongst others. Love is not something which God merely ‘does’. God is love, that is, every act of God flows from the love that God is by nature. We know that God is love because of Jesus! (1John1:1-4).

“1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

I am writing about what existed from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life [the One who existed even before the beginning of the world, Christ]—2. And the Life [an aspect of His being] was manifested, and we have seen [it as eyewitnesses] and testify and declare to you [the Life], the eternal Life who was [already existing] with the Father and was [actually] made visible to us [His followers]—3 what we have seen and heard we also proclaim to you, so that you too may have fellowship [as partners] with us. And indeed our fellowship [which is a distinguishing mark of born-again believers] is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4. We are writing these things to you so that our joy [in seeing you included] may be made complete [by having you share in the joy of salvation]-Amp

1John1:1-4

Jesus is the love of God heard, seen and touched. If we want to know what God is like, we begin with Jesus the Christ, because He is the self-revelation of God. How can we certify that a man is the self-revelation of God? Jesus said something remarkable: “anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Jesus claimed that His relationship with His Father was unparalleled in history.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to provide us with the undeniable evidence of the Father's love, for He is the Father's love embodied. He shows us that God never envies anyone or anything; He never desires to take for Himself what others possess but He rather longs to give away all that He has. He did not love us because we were lovable, but because He is love.

God is eternal, sufficient and satisfied with Himself. He is without deficiency or need. Complete in Himself, He chose to save us out of sheer love. Our salvation originated in the mind of God, and was initiated and accomplished by Him alone. The main reason behind His desire was to bring us into the intimate circle of eternal relationship at an infinite cost to Himself.

God did not demand that we first demonstrate our allegiance to Him before Christ would agree to die in our place, and include us into His Life. To demand that we should somehow show ourselves worthy before God, in order to be endorsed into our status as His children, is most futile. What could any of us offer God that would move the Holy Creator of the universe to offer His Son on our behalf? Nothing! So God acted, first motivated by His own love, to offer His own Son as the ultimate expression of His grace.

“32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

Indeed, He who His own Son did not spare, but on behalf of us all delivered Him up, how is it possible that He shall not with Him in grace give us all things? -Kenneth Wuest

Romans 8:32

What could God give as the irrefutable evidence of His love for us? There is only one answer: Himself. If He withheld Himself from us, no matter what else He could give us, it could not unquestionably establish the fact that He loves us.

***Because God
loves us, He did
not spare His Son
for our sake***

The greatest sorrow and burden you can lay upon the heart of the Father, the greatest unkindness you can do to Him is to refuse to believe that He loves you.

Christ died on the cross not in order to make God love us, but because He did love us while we were yet sinners, ungodly and His sworn enemies. Whenever you are tempted to doubt the love of God, go back to Calvary. In Himself, God is love; through Him love is manifested and by Him love is defined.

“6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. {in due time: or, according to the time}

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.”

Romans 5:6-8

If you want proof of God’s love for you, look no further than the cross where He offered up His Son as a sacrifice for your sins. Jesus Christ did not come to make God’s love possible but to make God’s love visible. The cross is the ultimate evidence that there is no distance to which the love of God will not go to effect His reconciliation with you.

The real issue that you are now faced with is not your sin. The ‘God’ presented to us in the Gospel has permanently dealt with sin in Christ. The issue now is whether you will accept His love and come to terms with your reconciliation with Him; it is whether you will turn from your own independence, submit to God’s unconditional love, and accept your acceptance which is His marvellous gift.

There is nothing you can do today that can make God love you more. Equally, there is nothing you can do that will make Him love you less. God does not love an indiscriminate mass of humanity; He loves you particularly at a personal level. He loves you as though you were the only one to be loved. Such a love does not leave you wondering whether or not you are saved. It announces to you outright that you are His and nothing can separate you from the love of Christ, not even your sin.

God's love is God's initiative and choice. It is not given on the basis of your performance. God's love revealed in the Gospel is not wages that you earn with a model of life. **It is a gift that you cannot earn and more than that, it is a gift you do not even deserve. It is even the opposite of what you deserve.**

The unfailing love of Christ is an objective fact affirmed over and over again in the Gospel. It is true, whether you believe it or not. Your doubts cannot destroy God's love neither does your faith create it. It originates in the very nature of God who is love and flows to you in the person of Jesus Christ. His coming is the final and indisputable proof that God cares immeasurably. Christ is the certainty of God's love.

Jesus Christ and Him crucified is the divine plus; it is the first part of our Gospel equation.

JC +

2.

Christ and Him Crucified

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

“You see, all have sinned, and all their futile attempt to reach God in His glory failed” The Voice

“For all have sinned and none has attained the glorious likeness of God.” Con

Romans 3:23

Who Christ is and what He did for you will never be fully valued and appreciated, until sin is clearly seen for what it is. To understand the Gospel of how God reinstituted man to favour with Himself by reconciliation, in a mutual exchange of equivalent value, one must first understand how that relationship fell into ruin.

The Holiness of God

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

"Don't let yourselves get taken in by religious smooth talk. God gets furious with people who are full of religious sales talk but want nothing to do with him." MSG

"Don't be fooled by the people whose sentences are compounded with useless words, empty words – they just show they are empty souls. For, in His wrath, God will judge all the children of disobedience for these kinds of sins." The Voice

Ephesians 5:6

God's holiness is often expressed as "moral perfection"; separation from sin. But this moral view of holiness fails to apprehend the ultimate ground of holiness which is God's triune relationship of love as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This Trinitarian relational basis of God's holiness is from all the eternities, precedes creation and does precedes the presence of sin and evil.

The word "holy" can be defined as 'separate' or 'set apart'. In reference to God, holy means He is distinct in His own class. None of His attributes can be understood by comparison to His creatures. The holiness of God is His essential nature, seen in all His qualities.

If the question were to be asked, “what is holiness?” the instinctive answer would be “the absence of sin”! although that may be enough of an answer for our understanding, due to our ‘familiarity’ with sin, it will be inadequate as a definition of the holiness of God. He is holy without any reference to sin. How do we define that kind of holiness?

The answer lies in the true nature of God revealed in Christ as love. Love is the epitome of all virtues and the highest expression of holiness. Love as a nature would imply an interpersonal quality requiring a subject-object relationship within the Father-Son relationship through the Holy Spirit.

The Father loved the Son before the creation of the world (John 17:24).

“24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world”.

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given to Me [as your gift to Me], may be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. –Amp

John 17:24

The Father is the Lover, the Son is the Beloved and the Holy Spirit is the bond of Love (Eph. 1:6, Rom. 5:5).

“6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

Ephesians 1:6

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

Romans 5:5

To attempt to define the holiness of God as His moral perfections alone does not tell who God is. God's holiness is rational in that He gives Himself to the One with whom He relates. Such a union between persons in the right relations of communion to one another is essentially the accurate definition of holiness.

This interpersonal definition of Holiness explains the seraphic hymn of “Holy, Holy Holy”, sung in the Heavenly Throne room. This thrice Holy Hymn was inspired by the shared love and Life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The relational aspect of the holiness of God causes us to see a new dimension with the issue of sin. It would be a distortion or

corruption of the nature of man preventing him from knowing God as He really is, and experiencing Him as saving Life through union with Him.

Unlike love, wrath is not one of the intrinsic perfections of God; it is the function of His holiness against sin. Where there is no sin, there is no wrath. While God is love and there will always be love in Him, God is not always wrathful. God's wrath is when in His holiness He confronts His image bearers in their rebellion against Him. This is a serious issue; since all men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, God due to His justice must judge every man. What does this really mean?

How Can A Loving God Be A God Of Wrath?

“18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”

Romans 1:18

God's wrath, like all His attributes, is an expression of His being which is love (1John 4:8). God as love finds the evil that hurts His children to be intolerable. He in His wrath judges it. However, what Paul tells us is that God has already accomplished judgment

against sin and evil through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of His Son, Jesus Christ.

In Christ, God's wrath was satisfied because the death of the Saviour removed what prevented us from experiencing Him in His fullness, that is, the corruption of our human nature.

The sin catastrophe entered into the world through what is known as the Fall. Few people realise that all the trouble in the world began with one lie and the sin of one man, Adam (Rom. 5:12). You need to understand that man's problem is much deeper than the outward appearance of things. As a matter of fact, all of man's problems originate from the one sin of one man. Man's condition in Adam is described in Colossians 1:21:

"21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled"-

Colossians 1:21

Man evaluated himself from the vantage point of his wicked works by which he esteemed himself to be separated from God in his own mind.

Apart from divine intervention, man would face eternal condemnation; for no matter what you may possess in the form of abilities, talents, or other human assets, you are completely

incapable of saving yourself or having fellowship with God. Any effort of man to save himself is utterly useless. There was only one option left: it was necessary for God Himself to save man.

Incarnation and Atonement

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

“Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it’s logical that the Saviour took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil’s hold on death” MSG

Hebrews 2:14

The reality of our atonement in Jesus Christ is grounded in the reality of His incarnation. This simply means that the Eternal Son who is of one Being with the Father became fully human. As the universal God who is also Consummate Man, Jesus Christ acts from the side of God as well as the side of man; God in Christ’s humanward movement and human in Christ’s Godward movement.

Jesus Christ in His One Person has joined God and all humanity in an indissoluble union; that is, at-one-ment.

The entire purpose of the incarnation was for God to adequately sum up man in Himself. What man is authentically is exclusively represented in Jesus Christ. The fact is settled in the New Testament that God became a man, and as a Man, He stepped in the arena of mankind's struggles to attain redemption, being considered and treated the same as man. As such, our Lord died as us, taking our death on behalf of us so that His death was in our interest and for our benefit.

The incarnation is the in-fleshing of the eternal Word, the Son of God who entered into this world as man through the birthing process. Therefore, it is not correct to say that Jesus has always existed. The *eternal Word* has always existed; the *Son of God* has always existed; but *Jesus* is the human name which the eternal Word took upon Himself when He came in the flesh. Remaining what He was (God), He became what He was not (man). Jesus is not two different persons – God and man; He is not schizophrenic. He is forever one person – the God-Man.

***The incarnation
is the infleshing
of the eternal
word***

Adam's sin placed all men under the dominion of death. This death speaks of man's estrangement and alienation from God (Eph. 1:2; Col. 2:13). The cataclysmic result of Adam's fall is not limited to physical death in Adam. Human beings were born with a sentence of death hanging over their heads; that is to say they were born physically alive but spiritually dead. All men who descend from Adam were born with corrupted desires and inclinations that render them completely dead to the peril of their own accumulating guilt (Eph. 4:18-19). This was the state of humanity identified with Adam.

This one man affected every man. When God created Adam, He gave him the ability of procreation. God put in him everything the human race would be. Adam was to reproduce copies of who he was in his posterity. When he fell, he genetically propagated the newly acquired sin nature. As such, the original sin is that nature and identity which has its source in the fallen progenitor. The sin nature made every man an exact imitator of the forefather, Adam.

What condemned human race and made it subject to death was the fact that they were 'in Adam'. It is this union with Adam that accounted for our trouble. It is our corresponding union with

Christ that accounts for our salvation by disbanding and annulling the first.

The point is not that all men sin, though they certainly do; but rather that Adam stood for them so that when he sinned, not only was Adam taken into account as a sinner, but they were as well taken into account as sinners. It is due to this that death passed unto all.

When God selected Adam as humanity's representative in the garden, He did so infallibly and impeccably. Although Adam was God's first step in the unfolding of His plan, he was not God's first thought. Behold the wisdom of God: in accepting the representation of one person for another, God was legally and vitally putting into place the basis of the coming of Christ as us, which is the heart and soul of our salvation. We will further explain this later.

God has reconciled all humanity to Himself in Christ Jesus, yet in love, God continues to extend to each person the freedom He has endowed to them in their agency to choose either to accept or reject His love for them. Love cannot be coerced by any means. This does not mean that the reconciliation effectuated in the Person and work of Christ is null and void until we receive it. It simply means

that the heart and mind must freely accept what is already given to experience its transformative effect at a personal level.

Within the simplicity of the divine nature, the righteous wrath of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is their holy love. God does not have some parts that are opposed to us while others are 'on our side', for God does not have "parts" at all. God does not experience internal conflict, nor is the barrier standing between us a problem within God but within man. It was the nature of sin which had corrupted him and distorted the image of God in the human creature.

God does not love us because of the atonement enacted in the death of Christ. Rather, reconciliation flows freely from the eternal Love that God Himself is, to draw near to us as He has drawn near us by doing away with all the barriers of sin, hostility and fear between us and Himself.

God's love for us was opposed to all that was destroying humanity-- the object of His love. God loves us with the very same love with which He loves Himself. God's 'yes' towards us has also resounded with His firm 'no' to everything which was dehumanising us from being what He ordained us to be.

In the complete union of the human and divine in Jesus Christ, vicariously and redemptively, the incarnate Son assumed our humanity and freely opened to us His mutual relation with the Father, making us sons in the Son.

Jesus Christ, Our Living Saviour

“For just as by that man’s disobedience the whole race of men was constituted sinners, so by this one’s obedience, the whole race of men may be brought into right standing with God.” Williams

“For as through the disobedience of the one man Adam, all men were placed in the class and condition of sinners, so through the obedience shown in His death upon the cross of the one man Christ, the whole multitude of believers shall be placed in the class and condition of righteous” Sanday & Headlam

Romans 5:19

Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man: He is man’s perfect God and God’s perfect man. At His incarnation, man was added to Him, God was not lost to Him: He emptied Himself not by losing what He was, but by taking upon Him what He was not. Nowhere does the Bible ever declare that the deity of Jesus Christ makes Him something more than a man or something other than human.

Scripture never allows the divine nature of Christ to overshadow or diminish His humanity.

The atonement was not a mere 'one time' transaction, although what He accomplished was once and for all. Due to the reality of the continuing humanity of Jesus Christ, that is the incarnation continuum, He is in Himself the atonement (Rom.5:9-11).

Salvation is not merely transaction or forensic, as something He did for us external to Him. It is fundamentally within the science of being, relational, in His Life interpenetrating our own in a permanent union.

Atonement can be summed up in 'an exchange'. Christ took what was ours so that we may partake of what is His. In His entire Life, a mutual exchange took place between God in Christ, and the world in Christ.

"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."

He made Christ who knew no sin to [judicially] be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we would become the righteousness of God [that is, we

would be made acceptable to Him and placed in a right relationship with Him by His gracious lovingkindness]-Amp

2Corinthians 5:21

Some have voiced the problem with the teaching of Jesus Christ as the God-Man, for they cannot see how God could die and yet the Gospel clearly teaches that Jesus died on the cross. God, who is life personified, cannot die for He is God. If He did, all else would cease to exist for He is the sustainer of all life.

It is true that God in Himself could not submit to death, but if He could become a true man, then as such He could experience all that we experience including death. But in experiencing death as the God-Man, the nature of death itself is transformed by the deity of the God-Man who experienced it in His humanity. Death died in the death of Jesus Christ.

Being the God-Man, Christ was the perfect Sacrifice for our sins.

If Jesus Christ could not experience sin and death as our true Representative, then He was not a real man but something else. But He is truly God and truly man. It was a man who sold us into sin; it could only be a man to ransom us out of sin. Man was the key figure of the Fall; consequently, man had to be the key figure of redemption.

To think of Jesus, the Christ as being different in any way from the rest of humanity, aside from His sinless character, is to do a major injustice to the doctrine of our redemption, for unless Jesus Christ is truly God, it is not God who saved us, and unless He is man, it is not man that is saved.

Yes, Jesus is God but He is equally man. The reason most people have difficulty in accepting the totality of the incarnation is their low estimation of man. The incarnation of Christ demonstrates that man is of such a quality of being that God can become a man and still remain God.

The Exchanged Life

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

“That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not be served and then to give away his life in exchange for the many who are held hostage.” MSG

Matthew 20:28

Indeed, God taking upon Himself humanity yet remaining God is hardly more explicable to human thoughts than man

becoming a partaker of the divine nature yet remaining a man. Both of these are those secret things that belong wholly to the Lord.

The essence of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ became what we were in order that we might become what He is. God has shared Himself with the human race to conform us to all that He is. This is the mystery of the Gospel

*Christ Partook of
our humanity
that we might
partake of His
divinity*

now revealed;(Col. 2:25-27; 1Tim. 3:16) for it is clear that the same God who partook of humanity will by that same means enable man to partake of divinity, to the same extent and degree as God Himself became a man. He who lowered Himself for man's own sake has exalted man for His own sake. In Jesus Christ is the condescension of God and the exaltation of man.

To restore and exalt man, who had been laid so low by sin, to the heights of divine glory, Jesus Christ, although containing all things within His own immensity, wills to become low. This He did not by putting aside His greatness but by taking to Himself our littleness.

By becoming a partaker of our own humanity, He now makes us partakers of His divinity. He was clothed with our flesh that we might be invested with His Spirit. The great promise of the

Old Testament is the coming of the Anointed One in the flesh, and it now stands accomplished and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The great promise of the New Testament is that men should be made partakers of His divinity and in this He had shared Himself with us.

The cross was the nexus of this union taken to its fullest extent; the altar of a Great Exchange. The ransom Jesus made is what made the exchanged life possible. The word “ransom” indicates that Jesus was paying a price for our release. It is the payment as equivalent for a life destroyed; the price of the redemption of a slave and propitiation for damage, to secure permanent deliverance.

The ransom Jesus paid was the terrible sufferings He endured under the judgement of God. He did this by becoming what we were, offering Himself as our representative, not just instead of us but as us. He did this to satisfy the divine essence of God’s justice which demanded that it be paid for; for as our judge the Father had decreed for the eternities that we will not be anything other than what He planned for us to be.

Qualified to Save Us

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,” KJV

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“But when the time arrived that was set by God the Father, God sent his Son, born among us of a woman, born under the conditions of the law so that he might redeem those of us who have been kidnapped by the law.” MSG

Galatians 4:4

“4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

Hebrews 2:4

The logical extension of Jesus Christ becoming our Saviour, is Him not just becoming all that we were but receiving the full extent of what corrupted man.

“3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Romans 8:3

What took place at Calvary was that all for whom Jesus Christ died, died in Him. He was our legal representative for we were unable to

*All for whom
Christ died, died
in Him*

redeem ourselves. We needed someone who was worthy enough to come and stand in for us before the bar of God.

Since Adam had become enslaved to the sin nature and all his progeny had endorsed his rebellion, they were equally counted as slaves of the sin nature.

To appraise the depth of our salvation, we must consider the crucial question, “saved from what?” We must first establish what exactly is the nature of sin which corrupted man in order to understand the work of our Saviour to counter it.

In many schools of thought within the atonement models of Christianity, death is viewed as the direct result of a punitive sentence pronounced by God. That is, they suppose God made a law and when Adam and Eve broke that law, death resulted from God’s punitive declaration. That is, God Himself made them mortal—made them die. The action and resultant punishment are understood as being of a juridical nature. In this view, God had no choice but to declare that Adam and Eve will die. The punitive action was demanded by a necessity to which God was bound—the necessity of being just.

Getting the Gospel Right

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”

For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to [that which] the scriptures [foretold].-Amp

1Corinthians 15:3

In contrast to the predominant ‘juridical’ view of the fall, the apostle Paul was given the ‘revelation of the scriptures’ (Rom 16:25-26), and as such he gives us the inspired commentary of the old covenant, and thus explains what really happened.

The sin of Adam was simply him choosing to forfeit his true origins as a delegated son of God (Luke 3:38). In other words, original sin is sin against ‘origins’. By embracing this mistaken identity, Adam partook of an erroneous version of ‘man’; he fell into a substandard ‘edition’ of God’s original intent.

The eating of the fruit represents that Adam and Eve had their minds corrupted by a “serpentine seduction” which twists the interpretation of the Word of God. This serpentine corruption offered them to ‘do’ something to become what they already were.

“3. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

...through this cunning deception, the utter simplicity of your relation to Christ would lose its grip on your mind... Johnson

2Corinthians 11:3

The concept of sin which polluted the minds of Adam and Eve was the false notion that they could become like God apart from God in their own selves. Believing this lie, they ceased looking to God for their sustenance. They instead looked to creation itself. So in this act, the first parents sought to exclude God from their lives and to live autonomously—independently of God.

Sin is much more than a moral short coming of failure to live up to some external code of behavior modification. Sin is the failure to realize that man can only be authentically man in union with the One in whose image he is made. Sin is restricting ourselves to isolation from God in order to live ‘autonomous’, self-centered lives. Our offense against God is not that we have ‘offended’ His honour, but that in our self-centeredness, we have turned from Life Himself. God hates sin, not because of what it does to Him but because of what it does to us.

Being Saved

“10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, it is much more certain, having been reconciled, that we will be saved [from the consequences of sin] by His life [that is, we will be saved because Christ lives today]. Amp

Romans 5:10

As we begin to explore the New Testament depths of redemption to describe the saving work of Christ, we must imperatively establish that sin and its relations with man is not essentially explained by legal concepts. The Law of Moses simply exposes the knowledge of a pre-existing condition known as sin.

“20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Romans 3:20

Complete salvation is not the mere cancellation of a sin debt. The Greek word translated as ‘salvation’ is ‘**soterias**’ whose

meaning is 'health', implying that salvation is principally therapeutic, organic, synergistic, transformational and ontological in nature.

Being saved means more than being saved from something such as sin, death or even hell. It is to be saved unto, that is, to be placed into God's shared Life in Christ through union with Him.

Recapitulation

"10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

Ephesians 1:10

While it is true that the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, that is, His dying, actually defeated death and its hold over creation (Heb. 2:14-15), the question remains, why? What was it about the death of Christ which is effective to reconcile us to God?

The crux of Paul's understanding of the work of Christ revolves around 'recapitulation'. Most Christians exclusively isolate Christ's death as salvific. As we shall see, it is the entire course of Christ's life which is vicarious, on our behalf, in our benefit and in our place; every aspect of the 'Christ Event' is salvific.

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Just as humanity participated in Adam's fall, this fall of the cosmos by the disobedience of one is only the pre-figuration in type and shadow of what Christ fulfils as the substance (Rom. 5:12-18, Col. 2:17). Jesus Christ is Adam undone, the archetype man of which Adam was merely a type. He took up Adam's failed career as the head of humanity and rectified the effect of sin on the entire stock of his genealogy by summing up all things, giving humanity a new lineage.

In Christ the second man from heaven, we now participate in exaltation in life, instead of the fall and death (1Cor.15:45-49). Jesus became the last Adam in a very real way. Adam's body containing all humanity is remade in Christ. So as Christ lives the life of a human, He redeems every aspect left broken and unfulfilled by Adam. It was vital that the Logos assumed full human flesh, and suffered and died as a human being in order that He might represent all humanity to God. Jesus Christ in His death at the cross, brings about the extinction of the fallen human race being Himself the *last* Adam. The death of Christ is effective in reconciliation for in His death the effect of sin is successfully brought to its conclusion on behalf of all.

"14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

2Corinthians 5:14

“6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

Romans 6:6

Christ who is the creative Logos becoming man is the beginning of salvation, for Christ re-enacts Adam, but this ‘re-enactment’ is in reverse, succeeding where Adam failed, demonstrating in Himself man as God intended.

Another Look at the Cross

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. “

Galatians 6:14

The cross is the greatest exposure God ever makes of Himself. In it, He shows the deepest and most intimate feelings He has as His only Son dies to give Him what He wants most. What He wants most is a family of sons and daughters just like the uniquely born Son.

Multitudes have never seen this truth. Paul could say of himself that the only thing in which he would ever glory was in the cross. This statement has intrigued me and has caused me to realise that we never advance in doctrine to the point of moving on from the cross of Christ, but only to a more profound understanding of it, for it is the cross that reflects the throne and the glory of God. Nothing is of equal importance, for there is no victory apart from what happened at the cross.

For Paul, preaching Christ crucified has a much broader meaning than focusing every sermon on Jesus' suffering on the cross. The cross of Christ is indeed the focal point for Paul's preaching, but as his epistles demonstrate, it also provides us with a view point of how we are to behold God, ourselves and the world in which we live.

When you look at the cross, what do you see? I will tell you what I see. I see the results of my sin in His flesh. He was beaten and scourged on my behalf. I once asked the Lord, "Why did Christ have to suffer such torture in His body for us?" and He told me that Christ had to suffer in His body to the same measure that the conscience of sin had tormented the souls and bodies of men.

When I look at the cross, I can plainly see an offense and a scandal to those who consider themselves most religious and intelligent to think for one moment that God had set aside the innumerable ways and method man has created in his search for God. The cross stands as the dividing line of the old and the new; of the sinner and the saint; of time and all eternity. Its scandal is its simplicity. It is so simple that it confuses the most sincere. The cross reveals that there is only one step in God's program and He did not even allow us to take it, but He took it for us.

Sometimes when I hear the manner in which some preachers present their messages, I can only wonder, "Has the cross changed anything?" The system of being blessed when you do good and be cursed when you fail was already in place before Jesus came. Why is such a system being preached today? It is because men have made themselves enemies of the cross in trying to add or take away from any part of what happened there (Philippians 3:18).

<i>At the cross, the ultimate plan of God was unveiled</i>	I can see that the Father has given the cross the judicial right to birth His own offspring. All that religion is attempting to reform, refurbish and re-educate in the old man was completely destroyed. I see that the cross has opened up
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the final part of God's plan which is to deal with man in His grace and to treat him as He has always desired; not on the basis of what man is in himself or what he can do but on the basis of who the Father is and what He has already done at the cross of Christ. I see that no one is condemned for the sin he has committed, but for the sin of unbelief, of not accepting Christ as their only saviour (John 3:16-17).

Dear reader, I can never sufficiently emphasise on the importance of the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross of Calvary. I would like you to know that Jesus the Christ had you personally in His mind when He went to the cross. The message of the cross is the cardinal truth on which the Gospel stands, for without the shedding of blood which represents His voluntary substitution, there is no remission of sin. The master truth of scripture, upon which the entire structure of the system of truth is sustained, is that "Christ died for our sins". I know that some, like the Greeks of old, may sneer and mock at this pertinent doctrine and call it foolishness, but I will never be ashamed to join the Apostle Paul and say, "be it far for me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 6:14).

Tetelestai!

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

“After he took the wine, Jesus said, “It’s done... complete.” Bowing his head, he offered up his spirit.” MSG

John 19:30

Tetelestai is the Greek statement translated as “*it is finished*”. It is the victorious proclamation Jesus made from the cross to announce the fact that the entire work of redemption had been accomplished. He had finished the work of offering Himself for the sins of men; the purpose for which God sent Him into the world. It is an announcement that the plan of salvation stands complete and will be complete forever.

***Christ did it, you
got it. It is
finished; it is a
done deal. Simply
receive it.***

The term *tetelestai* carries four major historical applications in its emphasis. Firstly, *tetelestai*, when used commercially, speaks of a payment that has been made in full and even overpaid. Ancient receipts for taxes have been found on papyri and written across them is this single Greek word which means “paid in full”. It was also used when a commodity was

bought with coins of precious metal. The coins were weighed at the scales to determine their value. When the value exceeded the cost, the statement “*tetelestai*” was made to indicate that the payment exceeds the cost.

In the religious context, it carries in it the idea of fulfilling one’s task and religious obligations (John 17:4). The death of Christ on the cross has completely fulfilled every obligation that God demands of man.

The word has also been applied militarily by the soldiers of the Roman Empire. It was a term to denote an ultimate victory in a decisive battle that precedes the end of a war. The end of a war would be announced by the proclamation ‘*tetelestai*’. When the Roman Centurion heard Jesus made this statement at an hour that seemed to be one of defeat, he concluded that he was standing in the presence of the Son of God. He had witness heroic feats in battle as a Roman soldier, but never had he witnessed such an attitude of triumph in the face of death.

In eschatology, *tetelestai* refers to the assured fulfilment of prophecy. Every prophetic utterance made in the Old Testament that carried with it a predictive element of foretelling was met in the four Gospels, in the earthly ministry of Jesus, by the phrase “and

it came to pass". Nothing was left wanting. Everything that the prophets had foretold had been realised (Luke 24:25-27)

The price has been paid by the crucified Christ. His payment exceeds the cost. He has released you from every religious obligation towards God. His sacrifice has secured for you a life of all-encompassing victory in every sphere of life. He has fulfilled every promise that the Father has pledged. He did it – you got it, for it is all of grace.

JC + 0

Altogether Gift

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

“Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It’s God’s gift from start to finish! We don’t play the major role. If we did, we’d probably go around bragging that we’d done the whole thing!” MSG

“For it is by grace that you have been saved. You received it through faith. It is not our plan or our effort. It is God’s gift pure and simple. You didn’t earn it, not one of us did, so don’t go around bragging that you must have done something amazing” The Voice

Ephesians 2:8-9

When the Gospel is explicitly expounded, we are left face-to-face with the grace of God. Theology has defined grace as “unmerited favour”. This statement is not incorrect, and irrefutably so, but it is certainly incomplete. Grace is the chosen New Testament word that characterises the essence of all that indwells Christ according to God’s plan of salvation for man. Grace refers to

all that God has unconditionally given to share in common with us in His Son.

Grace is more than a doctrine. It is not just a concept. It is a person, namely God Himself in Christ Jesus gloriously clothed in the Gospel. Pure and free grace shocks our religious sensibilities by unveiling to us the face of God. Grace is sufficient for it says, Christ is ALL. The ultimate test of your spirituality is the measure of your amazement at the grace of God.

The ministry of Christ through me has proclaimed and explained in multiple fashions, to men and women everywhere that Christianity is Christ, nothing needed, nothing added – just Christ. It is all about Jesus; just Jesus. It is destructive to add anything to Christ. In the end, such an attempt adds nothing to no one except the curse of God (Gal 1:8).

<i>You are complete and sufficient in Christ</i>	The great mistake made by most of the Lord's people in this day is that they are trying to discover in themselves that which should be found in Christ alone. As Christians, we find complete sufficiency in Christ and His provision for our needs. There is no such thing as an incomplete or deficient Christian. Grace has already supplied and freely granted you the provision of
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everything that you would ever need. There is nothing your human wisdom can do to augment that. A believer receives all that he would ever need and beyond at the moment of salvation. Each one must grow and mature but no necessary resource is missing. There is no need to search for something more. He did it – you got it. It's all yours. Your part is to accept and receive what God has already done by faith.

You cannot add to what God has already done; you can only receive it. Grace is what God has accomplished for you in Christ; faith is to acknowledge and receive what He has done. To experience God's grace is to claim by faith the facts God has accomplished for you in Christ.

The Gift of God Pure and Free

There are five separate elements that are required as a prior condition for grace to be grace; God presents it pure and free as God intended it. First, there must be a giver who is the source and origin of the gift which is of worth to qualify as grace, and he must possess the generosity to give it.

Second, the gift that qualifies it as grace must be in the legal possession and rightful ownership of the giver; it must be his to control.

Third, there must be a recipient to receive the gift that is qualified as grace which is in the legal possession of the giver.

Fourth, the giver must have the freewill disposition to freely release the gift in his legal possession to be received by the recipient.

Fifth, the recipient must possess the freewill disposition to receive the gift gratuitously bestowed unto him according to the predetermined terms of the giver, without contributing anything to it.

The Father is the source and origin of grace. The gift He freely bestows is His life. His life is in the Son that He freely gave for whosoever would believe; whoever receives the Son must receive Him by grace through faith without trying to contribute anything to God's gift, but simply trusting and receiving it.

Grace is Unconditionally Free

“That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.”

[And I pray] that the participation in {and} sharing of your faith may produce {and} promote full recognition {and} appreciation {and}

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understanding {and} precise knowledge of every good {thing} that is ours in [our identification with] Christ {Jesus} [and unto His glory]. - Amp

Philemon 1:6

Grace is translated from the Greek word ‘*charis*’, which is literally translated as “something beautiful to behold”. The word carries in it the concept of something which is absolutely free with no strings attached. It is given free without cost or obligation.

All that is in Christ is unconditionally free and it is bestowed to you and shared in common with Him through an indissoluble union.

“17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”

1Corinthians 6:17

Charis implies that all is given automatically, all-inclusively, non-repeatedly, immutably. Grace is God’s idea and it is God’s riches at Christ’s expense. In grace God dispenses gifts not wages. Some workers deserve more than others. In the world of grace, the word “deserve” does not even apply. In Christ, God is not dealing with you on the basis of what you deserve; He is not even dealing

with you on the basis of more than what you deserve. He is dealing with you without the consideration of what you deserve.

Religion scornfully despises the notion of grace for if religion were to accept it, grace will put it out of business! The chief effort that religious systems have attempted to use to disable the majesty of God's grace as a gift to you is to post warning signs around free grace. "Beware of those who teach free grace", they say. What are the implications of such a statement? They are implying that one has to prove his merit before God and earn the gift that God offers. It is the lie that says you must clean yourself up and get yourself straightened out before you can receive anything from God. This is a grace-hating, anti-Christ doctrine of demons. It is like telling an agonising sick person who is at death's door to first go and treat himself and get well before he will be received by the doctor.

Every blessing that there is has already been bequeathed to you freely by Christ and secured for you. They are by no means for sale; whether it be divine health and wholeness, complete deliverance, or all-encompassing prosperity, it is all yours in Christ. They are all part and parcel of the *soteria* (salvation) package that becomes yours at the new birth.

May I present to you the following illustration: If your best friend offered you a gift and you try to pay him for it, could you still call it a gift? Of course not! It becomes a debt which he owes you the moment he accepts your money. Your friend would probably be insulted and withdraw his gift and say, "I do not give this to you because I have to; it is a gift. Do you accept my gift or not?"

The moment you offer anything in exchange for a gift, it ceases to be a gift and becomes a debt! It is only when you put your money back in your pocket and stretch forth your empty hands that your friend's offer becomes valid and he can now extend the gift to you in a quality of a gift.

The same is true with God and His gift of grace which He extends to us in Jesus Christ. People who try to purchase eternal life by obeying certain ordinances as a condition for salvation are openly rejecting God's gift and many of them without even knowing it. Obedience is not the condition for salvation. It is the inevitable consequence of salvation. God will not owe anyone; He will not make Himself a debtor to anyone. Either you will accept His gift on His terms or you will go without it, for He will only offer it to you as a gift.

The religionist are bothered and upset at the fact that we the ministers of grace are giving away the treasures of heaven without first requiring people to turn away from sin and doing all those other things which will supposedly qualify them to become partakers of God's gift. They do not understand that in the economy of God, grace is preeminent and always comes first for it precedes all the operations of God that produce transformation in man.

As for the accusation of being an exponent of "cheap grace", I have absolutely nothing to worry about, for such accusers are desperately ignorant. There is no such thing as "cheap grace". Grace is free but it is certainly not cheap; it cost our Father everything for Him to offer it to us and the reason He bestows grace freely is that it is priceless and no one can afford it. It is absolutely free to us but infinitely expensive to Him. Anyone who calls grace "cheap" surely does not appreciate the infinite price God paid to give us His grace freely.

Fallen From Grace

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

"I suspect you would never intend this, but this is what happens. When you attempt to live by your own religious plans and projects, you are cut off from Christ, you fall out of grace." MSG

"If you seek to be justified and declared righteous and to be given a right standing with God through the Law, you are brought to nothing and so separated (severed) from Christ. You have fallen away from grace" AMP

"You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace." ESV

Galatians 5:4

The grace of God is never ineffective but it may appear to be ineffective to you in your personal life the moment you try to add anything to it. Turning to anything as a supplement to what Christ has done is to reject salvation by grace alone through faith alone, and is tantamount to turning your back on Christ. You renounce God's grace when you no longer rely on it alone. It is a dangerous place to be. An attempt to supplement Christ is an attempt to supplant Christ.

In Paul's day, a group of Christians in Galatia were deceived into believing that faith alone in Christ alone is just too simple to be

the truth. They accepted a false teaching of the Judaizers that said they had to first be circumcised to prove that they were genuine followers of Jesus the Messiah.

Since circumcision was only a minor surgery, why did Paul make it such a major issue to protest against (Gal 5:3)? It was because Paul understood what was really at stake. If a person has to do something in order to get right with God, then salvation will only be a work of man rather than God's free grace. Either people are justified before God partly by what they do for themselves OR they are justified exclusively by what Jesus Christ has already done for them. There is no middle ground.

Circumcision was the Galatians' way of saying that faith alone in Christ alone was not enough for them; that they needed something more and by so doing they had fallen from grace. If you try to be justified before God by anything you do, no matter how small it is, you are not free. Anything added to grace destroys it just as surely as does anything taken from it. When the law, even God's own law, is added to grace, His grace ceases to be grace to the one who adds to it. If there is anything in your bringing which is not due to God's bestowing, that you attempt to use to qualify yourself in your standing before God, you have simply accepted something substandard and inferior to grace.

When a Christian places himself under the law, his focus is on improving his behaviour. My question is, even if he manages to modify his behaviour temporarily, what has he accomplished spiritually? Even an unsaved person can improve his performance; the multiple religions of the world have proven this. The true source of joy is recognising that the supernatural character of Jesus Christ in you will emerge and influence you. Good works are always the fruit and not the root of God's saving grace.

To add one single thing to Christ, even a minor thing such as the removal of the foreskin, throws you out of the realm of grace. You are not allowed to lift the slightest finger to affect your own holiness. You cannot have it both ways. Either you are complete in Christ and He is the one who sustains you (Col 2:9-10; Jude 24-25) or you have to do the whole thing on your own.

I know that you might be wondering right now, "If these things be true, how then are we to live as Christians?" Allow me to answer you.

How Then Are We To Live?

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"

“As you have therefore received Christ, [even] Jesus the Lord, [so] walk (regulate your lives and conduct yourselves) in union with and conformity to Him.” AMP

“My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you’ve been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him.” MSG

“So now just as you have trusted Christ to save you, trust Him too for each day’s problems; live in vital union with Him” Tay

Colossians 2:6

There are three main tendencies that draw away people’s heart from the centrality of faith alone in Christ alone. The first is legalism which bases relationship with God on one’s performance. The second is condemnation which focuses more on the power of man’s sin instead of the power of God’s grace. The third is subjectivism which bases one’s view of God on the changing feelings and emotions of the heart. The Christian life is none of the above for these tendencies are spiritually bankrupt.

The Apostle Paul teaches a very simple yet profound principle regarding how believers are to live their lives now that they are in Christ Jesus. If this principle would be considered, it

would stop a lot of erroneous notions that exist within the Body of Christ that relate to the Christian way of life. He says 'Therefore, in the same manner as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him'.

At conversion you experienced Christ by accepting and placing your trust in Him (Ephesians 1:13). You relied on God's grace and what He has freely provided for you by means of the complete saving works of Christ. You were not accepted on the basis of any meritorious work on your part; you did not earn your salvation. It was freely offered to you as a gift. It is faith alone in Christ alone that is the basis of this conversion. Amazingly, many fall into the trap of thinking that after faith in Christ, they have to earn God's blessings by their works. Paul refutes this idea in this verse for that is not walking in the same way they have received Christ.

Your conversion started in grace and was received by faith. Your 'walking', which speaks of your daily model of living, operates in the same manner. If you started by grace, you should continue by grace. This is the major key of living an acceptable life before God. You should be making steady and consistent progress of growing in faith in what Christ has done for you and who you are in Him. The results of this will be a transformed life beyond recognition.

God's plan is for you to express Him through your day-to-day activities, in a way that is unique to you. You do not work for God; rather you are joined together with Him as a co-labourer. The good works of your life are not your gifts to God. They are actually God's gifts to you prepared for you even before you were born (Eph. 2:10).

A person who is walking under grace does not get up each day with the resolve to serve the Lord. He simply chooses to abide in Christ; to rely and depend on Him as he moves forward each day. When he sees an opportunity to serve God, he rejoices that his Father's omnipotence has allowed him to participate in the plans and intentions of God in the earth.

***The ONLY
Righteousness
God ACCEPTS is
HIS OWN***

Holiness is not something we are called upon to do in order that we may become something; it is what we are to do because of what we already are. Paul addressed the Corinthians as "those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Cor. 1:2). The congregation in Corinth was anything but a "holy" people in terms of life and conduct: false teachings, divisions and immorality marred the church. Still it was a congregation of saints, of the

sanctified, because in spite of the sinful conduct of many of its members and the worldly character of the church itself, it was still the church of God in Corinth.

Sanctification is not in the first place a conduct of life although it includes an ethical aspect. It denotes first of all the salvation truth that the Christian belongs to God. The most common use of the word “holy” is to designate that all true believers are in God’s safe keeping; they are His people.

A man may appear to be righteous before another man, but before God, the only righteousness that He accepts is His own righteousness. To stand before God claiming your own righteousness is certain rejection.

The practical aspect of sanctification is simply the believer’s heart awakened with the deepest sense of gratitude to the grace of God that has saved him. Once you realise that you are no longer your own, your mind is becoming aware of holiness.

A License to Sin?

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

“WHAT SHALL we say [to all this]? Are we to remain in sin in order that God’s grace (favour and mercy) may multiply and overflow? Certainly not! How can we who died to sin live in it any longer?” AMP

“So what do we do? Keep on sinning so God can keep on forgiving? I should hope not! If we’ve left the country where sin is sovereign, how can we still live in our old house there?” MSG

“What shall we say then? Shall we sin to our hearts content and see how far we can exploit the grace of God?” Phi

Romans 6:1-2

In my exposition of the Gospel to you, I am sure that at this juncture, you might be asking yourself the question, “now that I am living under the grace of God which grants me unconditional acceptance before the Father, should I not just go and sin my brains out?”

In my emphasis on the freeness of God’s grace in the face of the sin of man, you might accuse me of granting believers a license to sin. I will address this issue by first stating that Paul himself presented God’s grace in such a way that it was inevitable that someone should assume the same conclusion.

If the Apostle Paul, who received the revelation of grace directly from the Lord Jesus Christ was still misunderstood, then if I teach this same Gospel of grace and do not encounter the same arguments that claim that I am advocating for a life of sin, then I have not presented grace in the same apostolic manner that Paul did.

There is no better test as to whether a man is really preaching the New Testament Gospel of salvation than this: that some people might misunderstand it and misinterpret it to mean that because you are saved by grace alone, it does not matter at all what you do. If my preaching and presentation of the Gospel does not expose it to that misunderstanding, then it is not the Gospel.

The Gospel is clear. If you are in Christ, your sins as well as mine, past, present and future have already been dealt with once and for all! (Heb. 10:12-14) Most of the troubles you are presently experiencing in your life are due to your failure to acknowledge this truth. The Apostle Paul has emphatically declared to us that “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). Christ is the final solution to sin, and His death was a onetime event that took care of all of our sins forever (Heb. 9:24-28).

So often, people interpret such scriptures to mean that God has only dealt with nothing more than the past sins of the believer. Let me announce to you that it means infinitely more than just that! It means that you have been permanently disassociated with all notions of sin! You will never and can never come under any condemnation. It is impossible for the believer to be positioned in Christ, be accepted in the Beloved, and be in a position of condemnation (Eph. 1:6).

*Sin gives
occasion to
Grace but grace
does not give
occasion to sin.*

The Christian can never be lost for he has been found! When Paul said, “No Condemnation”, he made an absolute statement in the Greek that cannot be contradicted. Why does Paul say this? Is it not a dangerous thing to say? Would this not incite people to sin? If we tell Christians that sin has already been put away by Christ, are we not more or less telling them that they are free to go out and sin? If you react in that way to my statements of the Gospel, I am most happy, for I am obviously a true interpreter of Paul!

To answer your question, sin gives occasion to grace but grace does not give occasion to sin. Nevertheless, it is possible to become more conscious of sin than of grace and by so doing, fail to exercise the liberty that grace has freely secured for you. A license

to sin? No! Rather, a license to liberty, to know your Father and serve Him as the son that you are, without the consciousness of sin. It is when believers are no longer under the condemnation of sin that they are empowered to sin no more. Unfortunately, many have exchanged the order. They say “it is when you sin no more that God will not condemn you”. There is absolutely no power in that.

Grace liberates us to live as we want! So technically, what I am saying is that the believer can sin under grace but, however, due to the seed of God resident within him, he does not want to sin. The Father has granted us the liberty to live as we want because through the new birth He has implanted His desires in us!

“9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

1 John 3:9

“13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Philippians 2:13

The Kindergarten Level of the Gospel

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

“For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” RSV

Hebrews 8:12

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”

“Then he adds, ‘I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more.’” RSV

Hebrews 10:17

The assurance that God will in no wise remember the sins of the believer and that we have been accepted by Him in Christ is not an advanced doctrine. In fact, it is the kindergarten level of the Gospel. It is the very first blessing that the Gospel confers unto us and without being firmly established in it, you cannot claim with certainty the other blessings God has offered you. Although the assurance that God will by no means remember the believer's sin is the kindergarten level of the Gospel, for multitude of Christians it is a joy that is not even in sight. What does that tell you about the Church today?

The blood of Christ is the seal of God that testifies to the indisputable truth that all your sins were judged upon the cross in

the final solution of Christ's death. Understanding this is the foundation of what Paul calls 'my Gospel'.

Your Liberty in Christ.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." RSV

"Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you" MSG

"IN [this] freedom Christ has made us free [and completely liberated us]; stand fast then, and do not be hampered and held ensnared and submit again to a yoke of slavery [which you have once put off]." AMP

Galatians 5:1

Your salvation in Christ is liberation, and the Christian life is one of liberty. Christ has set you free, you are free indeed (John 8:32, 36). Christ's liberating action is not basically political in its scope; it is liberation from the law as a means of salvation from the power of sin and its effects, and from superstition.

Being justified by faith in Christ, you are no longer under the law of Moses, but under the grace of Christ (Rom. 3:19, 6:14-15; Gal. 3:23-25). Your direct access to the Father has been assured and secured because you are accepted in Christ (Rom. 5:1-2). Your standing before God will never depend on what you do, nor will it ever be imperilled by what you fail to do.

You have been set free from the dominion of sin (Rom. 6:14-23). Through the supernatural power of regeneration, you have been made alive to God through your inseparable oneness with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17). The desire of your heart is now to serve Him in true righteousness (Rom 6:18, 22). Now, motivated by a heart of thankfulness for the gift of grace and energised by the Holy Spirit, your greatest desire is to please the heavenly Father. Sin is incompatible with who you are and it is the last thing you desire to do.

You have been set free from superstitions, from the idea that matter and physical pleasure are intrinsically evil. Against this idea, Paul insists that Christians are free to enjoy as God's good gifts all created things, provided you do not indulge into excesses or hinder your own spiritual wellbeing or that of others (1 Tim. 4:1-5). You are free from the fear of death including the fear of Satan and his cohorts (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8).

What About Repentance Then?

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,”

“THEREFORE LET us go on and get past the elementary stage in the teachings and doctrine of Christ (the Messiah), advancing steadily toward the completeness and perfection that belong to spiritual maturity. Let us not again be laying the foundation of repentance and abandonment of dead works (dead formalism) and of the faith [by which you turned] to God,” AMP

Hebrews 6:1

Repentance is probably the most misunderstood word in the New Testament. It is translated from the Greek word ***metanoia***, which literally means “to change the content of the mental attitude”. It does not necessarily mean to be sorry for your sins nor does it mean that you are willing to turn your life over to God so that He can direct your path.

Repentance according to the New Testament means to stop trusting in gaining eternal life or the blessing of God through your own works. It is to change one’s mind. Those who believe that

salvation as well as God's blessings can be earned through good works are commanded in the scripture to repent! They are told to stop trusting in their works and come to God on the basis of grace through faith alone.

In Mathew 3:7-9, some religious men believed that they were right with God because they were the natural descendants of Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. They thought that because they had the right religion, they were right with God. John the Baptist told them to their faces that they had to repent; that is, change their mind and stop trusting in their religion as a means of right standing before God.

Luke 13:1-5 tells of a tower in Jerusalem that collapsed and killed eighteen people. The Jews with their religious minds searched for an answer for this tragedy. They reasoned that those eighteen persons on whom the tower collapsed should certainly be the worst sinners in all of Jerusalem and that God gathered them together at the appointed time in that place to execute His judgement on them. This conclusion however meant that only the very worst sinners are worthy of God's judgement. The rest of Jerusalem had apparently led good enough lives that they were not under God's judgement. To believe in this sort of reasoning however is to believe that salvation can be earned by the works of

the law. The Lord Jesus warned those who believed this way that they were facing eternal condemnation. He commanded them to repent! That is to change their mind and abandon all hope of securing a right standing before God by the works of the law, and trust in God alone for their salvation.

In Hebrews 9:9-14, Paul called the religious sacraments by which men tried to reach God in Judaism as “dead works”. A few chapters earlier in Hebrews 6:1, he described the foundation of the Christian faith as “repentance from dead works and faith towards God”; that is to say, you must stop trusting in dead works of religious sacraments and ordinances as a means of being right with God before you can exercise genuine saving faith in Christ.

I have established and clearly proven through three New Testament witnesses what repentance really is. It means you must have the mental attitude that rejects all the works of the law and manmade religious practices as having no value whatsoever, and trust in Christ alone.

The Grace of God is The Christ of God

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured

more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

“But whatever I am now it is all because God poured out such kindness and grace upon me not without results, but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet actually I wasn’t doing it, but God worked through me, helping and blessing me.” Tay

1Corinthians 15:10

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

“I have been put to death on the cross with Christ; still I am living; no longer I, but Christ is living in me; and that live which I now am living in the flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who in love for me, gave Himself up for me” Bas

Galatians 2:20

Grace, which is God’s unconditional acceptance of the believer in Christ, is extremely difficult for people to grasp even though they are in desperate need of it. A famous preacher has said that grace must be preached radically in order for lives to be

radically transformed. I disagree. The grace that has been freely bestowed to us in Christ Jesus is already so radical and so extreme in itself that in my estimate, we are to simply present it just as God has revealed it.

Grace is the ultimate of God. It is His greatest idea. In it, God has given us the uttermost and the most extreme of what He has to offer – *Himself!* How great is a God who gives God. Grace is God giving Himself generously in and through the Lord Jesus Christ to us and in us. Christianity is not the sacrifice you make; it is the sacrifice you trust. Jesus Christ died in order to crucify the old man and destroy the old life of the sin nature, to become your only life. Your present salvation is Jesus Christ in you right now. My definition of a Christian is a human being in whom Christ lives. It is His life in you that is the power that preserves you eternally secured. This is the definition of grace to its most exalted degree: not only what Christ accomplished for you on the cross two thousand years ago, but in consequence who He is in you now.

It is possible to mentally assent that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross two thousand years ago yet lose all your enthusiasm. It is no wonder: for it is difficult to remain excited about a historical event. But it is practically impossible to behold the revelation of Christ in you in the fullness of His glory and remain indifferent.

The faith that pleases God is that continuous awareness and dependence on the indwelling presence of Christ within you. Jesus Christ is no longer walking the streets of Israel. He is no longer physically on this earth. He is presently dwelling in you with all His fullness. Just think of it, God Himself in all His fullness is inside of you! How big is He? He is the superlative God; no matter how much you try to exaggerate His greatness, He is even greater.

It is most astonishing to hear phrases that are made in the ranks of professed Christians that pass for the Gospel. Statements are made such as, *“Christ wants you to give Him your life”*. Such statements have been repeated so many times that in the ears of many, it actually begins to sound beautiful. The Gospel says quite the contrary; your life before your new birth has absolutely nothing that God wants. It was the old man that expressed its origin in Adam in its operations. When Jesus died on the cross, it was this old life that He destroyed. In my humble opinion, that is clear evidence that He does not want it (Rom. 6:1-6).

Jesus Christ did not come to give us life per se, but to become our life. He came to live His life in you, through you and as you. Christ gave Himself for us to give Himself to us (Rom. 5:10).

Believe it or not, God does not even refer to you as “a sinner saved by grace” as so many Christians proudly proclaim. What a pitiful description of a person who possesses the very life of Jesus Christ! Sixty-five times in the New Testament, Paul calls believers, “saints”. Why would a Christian want to identify himself with the word *sinner* when Jesus came to save him from his sin? These concepts are mentally born of the false belief that God keeps a record of past wrongs.

It is amazing how straightforward the Gospel of grace really is. I call it the “naked Gospel”. My reason for such a term is that when you see the Gospel as God reveals it, you are completely exposed to a new realm that you

*Jesus didn't
come to give us
life; He came to
be our life*

never knew existed. It involves an unlearning process whereby all the misconceptions of God and His Christ are removed and the blinders fall off of our eyes. As it was in the days of Paul, the glorified Christ first blinds you to what you think you know of God before He removes the scales and grants you the eyes to see the Father as He really is.

Most Christians are in some way busy searching for revelation in order to renew their minds. Little do they know that they cannot just take new revelation and build it upon an old

covenant mindset. The new and the old do not mix. Jesus said that one cannot put the new wine of the New Covenant into the old wineskin of the Old Covenant. If you build new thought patterns on top of old ones, you will end up looking like the majority of the Church today: confused, frustrated, without any real power. What you need is a complete paradigm shift into a new consciousness, a state of awareness enlightened by God.

As He Is, So Are We

“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.”

“In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment [with assurance and boldness to face Him], because as He is, so are we in this world.” AMP

1 John 4:17

As Christ is, so are we in this world. Notice the tense that is used. As Christ is now at this very moment, glorified and seated at the right hand of God the Father, having all things placed under His feet, having been invested with all authority, dominion and rule, so

are we. Not in the future after we die and go to heaven, but right now in this world. We are exactly like Him.

Who you are in Christ is identical to who Christ is in you. That is to say in the eyes of the Father, you are one and the same. Almost every Christian that I have met who believes in the possibility of losing their salvation always gives a reason that involves them. *“What if I sin? What if I stop believing? What if I ...?”* It is always the same. They are always contriving some sort of hypothetical scenario that puts them in the centre of the equation. Let me remind you that it is not about you, it is about Christ in you. That is why the Father relates with you on the basis of His Son in you.

The Grace Paradox

“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”

“For we who have believed (adhered to and trusted in and relied on God) do enter that rest, in accordance with His declaration that those [who did not believe] should not enter when He said, As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest; and this He said

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although [His] works had been completed and prepared [and waiting for all who would believe] from the foundation of the world.” AMP

Hebrews 4:3

The main focus of the Gospel is not about doing things for Christ; it is being in Him. The idea of building your life on biblical laws sounds admirable but it is a subtle form of legalism. God wants to bring you to the end of your self-sufficiency, the utter exhaustion of your own resources. This is why you will always fail no matter how hard you try to be godly in your own self. God wants to bring you to a place where all you have left is Him. That is the safest place to be.

Christian living is nothing less than the expression of the divine life through a man. Why is it that many Christians struggle? Why can they not live the Christian life? The paradox is this: God never intended for you to live it. Only one person has ever been able to live the Christ life and that person is Christ Himself. Christians who are looking for ways to live the Christian life on their own always end up reverting to the law in the search for resources, without realising that it has none.

Another very strange paradox that I have discovered is that the greatest successes I have ever enjoyed did not come from

strenuous work but from spiritual rest. When you work, Christ rests; when you rest, Christ works.

Your responsibility is simply to respond to His ability; to rest in Him. The goal of the Christ life is not to build a moral lifestyle but to live a miraculous one by allowing Christ to express Himself through you. I emphasise this for Christ is now the only life you have. If He were to leave you, we would know right away because your body would collapse to the floor as dead, for your spirit and soul cannot reside in it without His life since your old life died in Him at Calvary. So much for losing your salvation as many suppose. Once you see who Salvation is, the possibility of losing Him becomes improbable if not impossible.

The Assurance of Your Salvation

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”

“God’s Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children.” MSG

Romans 8:16

“and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” ESV

“By his Spirit he has stamped us with his eternal pledge--a sure beginning of what he is destined to complete.” MSG

2 Corinthians 1:22

“Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”

“Now He Who has fashioned us [preparing and making us fit] for this very thing is God, who also has given us the [Holy] Spirit as a guarantee [of the fulfilment of His promise].” AMP

2 Corinthians 5:5

The word of God is clear. It was not you that accepted Christ. Rather, it was He that accepted you (John 15:16). Yet many Christians actually think that they accepted Christ and thus it is only natural for them, according to that thinking, to keep accepting Christ every hour of every day in order for them to be sure that they will make it as Christians. God’s purpose is not that you should rededicate *yourself* with all its abilities but that you should give up all hope in *self* to have faith in Christ. Many times, we so easily fall into the trap of trying to live for Christ when what He really wants

is to live His life through us. He is not interested in what you can do for Him; He is interested in living His life through you.

Every genuine believer fully understands that he did nothing to become a Christian. He simply trusted in Christ. Yet so many believe that now in order to become a victorious Christian, they must do something special. So they substitute trying in the place of trusting, then they wonder why it does not work. If it is grace all the way, it is faith all the way and faith in its highest expression is confidence in God.

Faith is the clarity of the verity that gives stability to your certainty. It is an affirmation and an act that claims an eternal truth as an accomplished fact. Faith is the instrumental spiritual force that appropriates the realities of the Gospel. Authentic faith must be based solely on scriptural facts. Unless faith is established on New Testament realities, it is a presumption.

The Gospel has raised faith to a place of pre-eminence for it is the only means that corresponds with grace. Faith is the simplest, easiest and freest channel God could use to convey His grace. The means of faith alone guarantees that salvation should be entirely of grace alone, that all glory should be God's and His alone. Faith is the

only way grace can work. They are thus correlative terms that sustain the comprehensive character of God's salvation.

A "Christianity" that does not clearly present the Faith of Christ alone as its focus and as the basis for our assurance and security of salvation is evidently false.

Unbelief versus Faith

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

"[Therefore beware] brethren, take care, lest there be in any one of you a wicked, unbelieving heart [which refuses to cleave to, trust in, and rely on Him], leading you to turn away and desert or stand aloof from the living God." AMP

"So watch your step, friends. Make sure there's no evil unbelief lying around that will trip you up and throw you off course, diverting you from the living God." MSG

Hebrews 3:12

The Lord Jesus Christ did all the work necessary to save man from his sins. However, to experience the benefits of what God has provided in Christ, you must become acquainted with what it

means to be in Christ. The Gospel of Christ is true, whether you believe it or not. But it will by no means benefit you unless you believe it just as God has revealed it. This does not mean faith is a requirement that the Gospel demands. The message of Christ is the 'Word of Faith' which supplies faith.

Unbelief will rob you of your rights and privileges in Christ. Unbelief would beg God in despair, *"please God, do something about this and that"*; but faith looks at the finished work of Christ with assurance and claims it as a present reality. It boldly declares *"Father, Christ did it all for me in order that I may have it all. I receive it as such"*. Unbelief toils in religious achievement in an attempt to engage God to commitment but receives nothing. Faith, on the other hand, understands that in Christ, the Father deals with us in grace by which everything is already supplied and comes to us freely. Unbelief tries to see what is going to happen, but faith trusts with certainty on the reality of what Christ has already done.

The Economy of Persuasion

"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me.” RSV

1 Corinthians 15:10

The truth is that every believer is already a possessor of the faith of God. However, you will only be enabled to use that faith according to your actual knowledge of Christ. Faith needs realities to rest on. Without an essential understanding of these truths, faith has nothing to operate with. It is the unmovable facts of the Gospel that become the stability of the believer's faith. You cannot trust Christ further than you know Him. You are not just to learn the facts in the Gospel but, ever more intimately, the One who upholds them.

The reason for the multiple divisions within Christianity today is due to the varying degrees to which the different groups of Christians have accepted to walk and advance in the faith of God. You are what you believe because you are what you think. You think what you know and you know what you hear. Multitudes of professed Christians know nothing of this message. As a result, they think according to what they know and thus believe according to their wrong thinking.

***In the New
Testament, your
position is your
possession***

Many ask the question, “If I do not possess a sin nature as you say, then why do I still sin?” My answer is twofold: either you are still an unbeliever or you do not believe the fact that you do not possess the sin nature. You will manifest what you believe. If you believe you are still a sinner, you will simply manifest it. If you believe you are the righteousness of God, you will manifest it as well. It is all a question of identity; that is to say you experience what you consciously relate with. Your mental state is carried forward into manifestation and becomes your experience in daily living. Your actuality is the reflection of your mentality for the quality of your life is determined by the quality of your thoughts. It is all a matter of identification. What you consider to be related to you and treat as your own becomes your experience.

Father God invested the believer with His own faith for the purpose of identification with Christ. Every problem a believer in Christ Jesus faces can be directly linked to either a lack of understanding of the new creation, or a failure to appropriate the legal provisions of the New Testament.

If a believer erroneously assumes any other identity than who he is in Christ, the irrefutable result will be failure. So many

Christians are presently living in a state of insecurity and inferiority due to the lack of the assurance that is rightfully theirs in Christ. They are constantly hesitating to boldly assume their position in Christ and acknowledge that they are actually who God says they are. They have embraced a mistaken identity in their paradigm and are living far beneath their rights and privileges. They have mentally built walls around them through fear, and to many it is their own thoughts that are the prisons that enslave them.

Who you think you are will determine what you have. In the New Testament, your position is your possession for it is by accepting who God says you are that you are granted access to have what He says is yours.

Abba Father

A person has no identity apart from his relationship with someone or something else. The greatest crisis in our world today is an identity crisis. People are latching on to practically anything in a desperate need to discover who they are. People try to determine their identities through their background, ethnic origin, appearance, level of education, accomplishments, family relationships and in so many other ways. Until you know who you are, you will follow anyone and will end up being lesser than what you were meant to be.

There is only one way to determine your true identity. It is a vital necessity to know who you are, but even more important is to know Whose you are. It is possible to live with unshakable confidence in this world once you know for certain Whose you are. I am speaking of the greatest of all relationships from which you derive your new nature and from which your new identity originates. It is your relationship with God as your Father!

The greatest revelation of God in the New Testament is that He is our Father! The implications that God wants you to call Him Father are astounding. Having God as your Father means He is a living personal being and not an impersonal force. It means that

you can get to know Him intimately. It means you can relate with Him on a personal basis. You might not know how to relate to an Almighty God, or to a Most High One because you have never met anyone like that. But relating to God as a Father has given you an earthly frame of reference to the closest and most intimate of relationships – that of a father and of a son.

“Father” is the most significant name of

<i>As a believer, God is your FATHER.</i>	God revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It is the name that sets Christianity apart from all other religions of the world. Other religions invite us to submit to their creators but Christianity invites us to believe in a Son and enter into an intimate family relationship with God as the loving Father. Jesus Christ the Son of God came that we might receive the same degree of Sonship that He Himself possesses with His Father. Yes, in the Gospel God has chosen to be your Father.
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In almost every prayer that Jesus uttered in the New Testament, He addressed God as Father. This is a radical departure from Jewish custom and tradition. Although the Jewish people were giving a lengthy number of appropriate titles for God in personal prayer, significantly absent from the approved list was the title “Father”. The serious reaction of the Jews against Jesus was His claim that God was His Father, coupled with the manner in which

He addressed the Father, demonstrating a certain equality that He enjoyed with Him.

The Gospel reveals the relationship of the Father and His family. The moment you perceive Christianity as a religion, you have robbed it of its greatest beauty. One becomes a begotten son of God through regeneration; that is to say the new birth. The Spirit of adoption will implant the nature of God within you and you will be able to relate with Him as your Father through faith in Christ. He will confirm your sonship by creating in you a genuine love for God as a result of realising the immensity of the love of God. The believer in Christ who knows his Father is the evidence to the reality of Christianity in every generation.

Paul explains that the Spirit of Sonship cries out “Abba Father” from within the believer’s heart. The word “Abba” is a transliteration of an Aramaic term of deep endearment derived from child language. It is much deeper and more intimate than the English word “daddy”. In the Jewish world, slaves were formally forbidden to call their household masters “abba”. Why? You had to be the actual offspring of a man before it was permitted to call him “abba”.

The Spirit of adoption in the believer calls out “Abba Father” because God is now literally his Father and he is now literally God’s son. The Spirit of adoption wants to lead you into that sonship right now.

The Final Word!

God loves you so utterly and completely that He has given Himself for you in Christ Jesus His beloved Son, and has thereby pledged His very Being as God for your salvation. In Christ, God has actualised His unconditional love for you in your human nature in such a once-for-all and irreversible manner that He cannot go back upon it, without undoing the incarnation, the cross and the resurrection, and thereby denying Himself. Jesus Christ died for you and gave Himself as you, precisely because you are weak and sinful. The true nature of love makes you worthy of Him. He has already made you His own before and apart from your every believing in Him. He has bound you to Himself in such an inseparable way that He will never let you go, for even if you reject Him, and condemn yourself, the love will never cease. Therefore, repent and believe in Jesus Christ as your only Lord and Saviour.

Prayer of Salvation

Heavenly Father,

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

I believe He died on the cross and shed His blood for me.

I believe that He was buried, and that on the third day,

He was raised from amongst the dead.

I believe He ascended on high and is seated at your right hand.

I acknowledge with my heart, and confess with my mouth;

That Jesus is Lord!

I receive the gift of Eternal Life in to my spirit.

ABBA FATHER!

AMEN

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Bibliography

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Bas	The New Testament in Basic English
CON	The Epistles of Paul (W. J. Conybeare)
ESV	The English Standard Version
KJV	King James Version
MON	The Century Translation: The New Testament in Modern English (Helen Barrett Montgomery)
MSG	The Message
Nor	The New Testament: A New Translation (Olaf M. Norlie)
Phi	The New Testament in Modern English (J. B. Phillips)
Rhm	The Emphasised New Testament: A New Translation (J. B. Rotherham)
RSV	The Revised Standard Version
Wey	The New Testament in Modern Speech (Richard Francis Weymouth)
Johnson	The Johnson version
Kenneth Wuest	Kenneth Wuest Version

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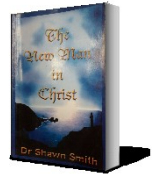
Fathered by God

As Righteous as God



Experiencing the Powers of the
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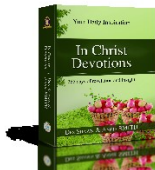
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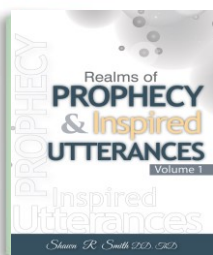
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