

Pardoning Grace Journal

Issue Theme: "The All-Sufficient Savior"

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Is Salvation Dependent on Morality after the Gospel?

Giovanni Camacho

Is salvation dependent on morality after the gospel?

Religious people I meet are always talking about their "personal holiness." Almost everyday, I bump into someone who will quote Scripture out of context to support the notion that unless a professing believer is producing works (and by that the religious person means keeping the law; and by that the religious person means the parts of the Ten Commandments that they themselves are trying to outwardly keep), that the professing believer may in fact be an unbeliever.

With incredulity the religious person will ask "can someone live in unrepentant sin and be a Christian?" Typically, they have a limited subset

of sins in mind: homosexuality, drunkenness and perhaps adultery. They will never ask if someone can live as a liar, disrespectful to parents, a blasphemer, or an idolater, and be a Christian. They will never ask if someone who fails to perfectly seek the kingdom and the Lord's righteousness can be a Christian. Or better still, they will never ask if someone who fails to love God perfectly with heart, soul, and mind can be a Christian.

It is always what they consider to be the big, bad sins that someone cannot be doing if they are really a true Christian. The little ones are fine because, after all, no one is perfect (*sarcasm alert* right, because failing to love God perfectly is a little sin compared to homosexuality). But if you are doing the big, bad ones according to their standard, then you have reason to question whether you have been truly converted. Of course, these questions betray their lack of understanding of a few things:

- 1) A lack of understanding regarding the absolute perfection that God's law requires. God's law requires absolute perfection, not best efforts, which means that no man can be saved, or find assurance of salvation through imperfect legal obedience. Man is imputed with Adam's guilt, and is guilty of his own legal violations.
- 2) The nature of God-given faith. Faith is given only to the elect by God as a gift, and God never gives a lame or dead faith to an elect sinner. The faith God gives always functions, because God does not do anything imperfectly, nor does He cooperate with men, nor does He leave the success of His ends dependent on men.
- 3) The finished work of Christ for His elect.

4) The nature of God-given repentance. Repentance is not a promise to do better. It is not even efforts made to do better. It is a change of mind caused by God in the minds of His elect concerning the only acceptable righteousness before Him, that of His Son Jesus Christ. Remorse for sin is not repentance. Promising to change is not repentance. Quitting drinking or smoking is not repentance. Repentance is a supernatural change of mind. It cannot be mustered up by dead sinners afraid of eternal punishment.

The religious person speaks of unrepentant sin with disdain, as if they have every sin of their own lives identified and mortified. As if the fact that they are attempting to be moral means they are not in "unrepentant sin." As if the fact that they are not gay, not cheating on their spouse, or not getting drunk means that they are not in constant, open, and unrepentant rebellion against a Holy God. Friends, deception is real.

Usually, the accusation of living in "unrepentant sin" arises in the context of talking about the complete freedom that the elect sinner has in Christ, or in the acknowledgment that all we ever do is sin against a holy God, or, worst of all, when talking about Christ's finished work for His people as the all sufficient basis of salvation.

They will accuse brethren of loving sin, or looking for excuses to "live in sin," the implications of their statements being that they do not love sin, or that they do not live in sin. This only betrays the fact that they do not realize how truly sinful they are—that all they ever do is trespass against a Holy God. They will say things like "well sure, I sin, but it isn't a pattern of life." Or, "yes I sin, but I don't live in sin." Or, "if you're not progressing in holiness, then maybe you're not saved." Or, "justification is objective, but sanctification is subjective."

My question to people who are deceived into thinking that their meager, weak, and inconsistent attempts to obey the law are the proof that they are saved: Is the work of Christ somehow deficient? Is there something that He did not do, or worse yet, failed to do by His death on the cross which leaves the elect sinner with a burden of now working to perfect His otherwise incomplete work? God forbid!

"For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." Hebrews 10:14 ESV

Christ has perfected His elect by His single offering. He did all of the work necessary to satisfy God and ensure that the elect will be spared from the coming wrath. There is nothing that the elect sinner can do to add to Christ's work, to add to their justification, or to add to their sanctification. He did it all, and praise God for that!

The elect sinner is holy before God, not because of their efforts to obey, but because of Christ's imputed righteousness. The elect sinner cannot, through imperfect obedience, further sanctify themselves, or find evidence of regeneration. Evidence of regeneration is found in believing the gospel.

The elect sinner is only holy because of Christ, not what they are now doing.

Now, in order to avoid the inevitable accusation of antinomianism, should the Christian try to live a life pleasing to God? Yes! "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own

possession who are zealous for good works.”Titus 2:11-14 ESV

Is our inevitable failure to do these things evidence we are not saved? No! “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

Is a "pattern of sin"(whatever that means) evidence that we are not saved? No! “For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.”Romans 9:15-16 ESV

Should we sin that grace may abound? No!“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”Romans 6:1-2 ESV

The regenerated believer should seek to live in purity before God. But we have no intrinsic righteousness or holiness of our own. Any good standing we have before God is based on the merits of Christ and those alone. “For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—”Philippians 3:3 ESV

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The Lord is My Portion Forever!

Jason K. Boothe

The Summer of 586 BC would not be a happy time in the City of David. Having sinned against the Lord, refusing to heed the warnings of the prophets, the swift judgment of God fell heavily upon the people. As the instrument of God’s

wrath, the Babylonian army flooded through the broken gates and shattered walls of the city. What a horrifying ordeal indeed! In a futile attempt to hold back the inevitable carnage, the people of Jerusalem, trusting in their own ingenuity and strength, barricaded themselves inside the city attempting to outlast the invaders. But it was to no avail. Babylon would have victory, Jerusalem would be burned, and God’s people would be carried off into foreign lands as slaves.

The writer of Lamentations records the nightmarish reality in serious terms. Consider some of the chilling words found toward the conclusion of chapter two, “the young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast slain them in the day of thine anger; thou hast killed, and not pitied” (Lamentations 2:21). The darkest days possible had fallen on the children of Israel. No earthly hope remained. What’s more, God did not merely permit these tragedies to befall them. Oh no! He orchestrated their destruction! Surely, as the Scripture soberly declares, “thou hast slain them in the day of thine anger!”

But with every night, even nights of seemingly endless deep and all-encompassing darkness, the day must come. God would use this situation – yes THIS situation – the utter destruction of His own people, for their good and for His glory. The Psalmist wrote, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5b).

The writer of Lamentations took solace in this beautiful reality, taking refuge, not behind the walls of Jerusalem, nor behind the mighty men of Israel. With earthly comforts and shelters torn down and left in shambles, our writer sought and found refuge in the cleft of the Rock, the Lord God of Hosts!

What does he discover as he seeks spiritual refuge in the Lord? He finds his own grateful and thankful heart! He praises God through the pain,

through the agony, through the smoldering ash-heap that once was the great city of hope in the promised land. Our writer finds words of thanksgiving to God! He writes, "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." His hope, his peace, his stay: the steadfast mercies of God! With a thankful heart, he praises God for showing mercy, knowing full well his own guilty state. He did not thank God for his own self-righteousness. On the contrary, he threw himself as a guilty sinner on the mercies of God, knowing that his only hope of escaping God's judgment rested solely in the Divine prerogative.

When everything else was taken away, God's loving-kindness and tender mercies toward His elect people remained. It was to this end that our writer shares with us a beautiful truth to which each and every believer must lay claim: "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him! (Lamentations 3:24).

Today, so many vainly attempt to find safety and assurance in material things. Finances, houses, and positions of authority and influence are just some of the ways men try to protect themselves from all sorts of calamity. Others search for spiritual assurance and peace by dabbling in the graveyard of works religion. But overflowing bank accounts and lengthy lists of so-called good works shall one day crumble like the walls of Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon! Certainly, there is no peace, no solace, in the corrupt illusions men prop up to deceive their own souls.

Like the writer of Lamentations, we must be taught by the Spirit of the living God, that our only portion, our only hope, rests solely in the mercies of God. Truly, God is the unfailing portion of His elect! O beloved, as we rest in God, in His Christ, we too can say of the Lord, "thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not" (Lamentations 3:57).

Do you trust in the mercies of the Lord alone for all hope of righteousness and peace with God? Or do you remain deceived by your own sense of worth, your own self-righteousness, your own works? Truly your walls will one day come down. Your gates will burn. Judgment is coming. Babylon will soon be at the gates. To where shall you go when that most dreadful hour lays hold of you?

God's people know exactly where to flee for refuge, true and everlasting refuge! They believe rightly that God "will have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies (Lamentations 3:32a). As was truly declared by the Psalmist, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (73:26).

May the Lord be pleased to reveal to you the Hope of Glory, Christ the Lord, in the saving Gospel of God's Sovereign Grace for poor sinners – Amen.

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I Will Give to Him who is Thirsty

Henry T. Mahan

It is not good for people to spend their lives seeking God and not finding peace in Him. It is not good that we should be ever learning and never able to rest in the knowledge of Christ. It is not good to be always doubting, and when asked about our doubts to make the untrue excuse, "Oh, I am not doubting God, I am only doubting myself," No! It is God who promised life in Christ, and it is God whom we are doubting. He said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and

the end, I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Rev. 21:6).

"And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). Of this promise Bonar wrote, "Thirsty one, it is with the water and not the vessel that our souls need to be concerned! It is not the quality of your vessel, but the quality of the water of life (Christ Jesus) that satisfies, sanctifies, and purifies! And he whose pride will not allow him to drink from a weak, soiled, and broken vessel (such is the best faith) must die of thirst; and he who puts away the promise of reconciliation because of imperfect faith must die the death."

He who says, "I believe the right doctrine, but I don't believe it in the right way; therefore, I can't have peace" is looking totally in the wrong direction and will never find peace.

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Debt Free!

Scott Price

There are many articles, books, and radio programs on how to get out and stay out of debt. It is not fun going through life with bills piling up and bill collectors calling to ask where the money is. The bumper sticker that says "You owe so off to work you go" is very true in this case. When a person finally gets out of debt by managing their money properly or attaining a large sum of money somehow and applying that money to pay off their debt, the feeling of being debt-free is a very welcomed feeling.

There is a more important debt that needs to be paid off. Spiritually speaking, we are born into this world in debt to God. Romans chapter 5:12-21 explains that the original sin and guilt of Adam was transferred to our account. Now we owe that debt with no way of paying it. On top of that, we

add to the debt by personally breaking the holy law of Almighty God. The total bill keeps getting larger and larger daily. The debt we owe is to God's law and justice and we have no way of paying. As a matter of fact, if we seek to pay it ourselves we only make it worse since God will not accept what we have to offer. Our best payment is said to be filthy rags, dung, vanity, self righteousness, etc. and that is an unacceptable payment.

There is only one acceptable form of payment to reach a debt free spiritual status. There must be a suitable sacrifice made whereby the debt can be paid off in order for the bill collector to be appeased and reconciled. The payment that is acceptable and actually pleasing to God is BLOOD, not mine, not yours but the precious blood of the God-man Mediator, the LORD Jesus Christ. He is the only suitable sacrifice who is qualified to pay the price for the sin debt.

The currency that is acceptable was said to be the blood of Christ. What is the significance of this blood? The word of God says that life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11) and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22). The idea of blood refers to a sacrifice or death which was pictured throughout much of the Old Testament. This refers to one who is acceptable taking the place of one who is NOT acceptable. Substitution is the idea here. Christ died as a substitute for His people. Wrapped up in the idea of substitution, death, and sacrifice is MERIT.

This merit was also that of appeasement or satisfaction as Christ fulfilled the demands of the law by obeying the law perfectly and paying the penalty and debt that was owed by His people. The blood of Christ is the whole merit of the work of Christ. This is not only because of what He did but also because of who He was. He established a perfect righteousness that will be imputed (legal transfer) to the account of His people. As a result of that, sin will never be imputed to their account

ever again: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" Romans 4:8.

The debt of sin is the curse of the law. Galatians 3:13 says: "Christ has redeemed us (believers) from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (substitution)....." Christ actually voluntarily took on (by imputation) the debt of His bankrupt, ungodly, sinful people and paid in full the whole price, past, present, and future that was owed by them. The price is paid and the work is done. Do you see any of this as being valuable? If you are looking to Christ and His merit to pay your sin debt you have the greatest treasure on earth and will be debt free. If you are still so blind you think you can pay the price on your own, then you still owe the debt. Think on these things.

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The Saving Grace of Justice

David Bishop

When found within the context of the awesomeness of God's sovereignty and the propitiatory justice of definite atonement, these words are a powerful reminder of the grace with which God saves.

But what happens when they are not found within the context of God's sovereignty and definite atonement? What happens instead when they are found within the context of free will and the struggle to self propitiate?

I was raised Pentecostal. In addition to this, I spent the first twenty-two years of my adult life in the Charismatic movement. I must warn you, not all Charismatics are the same. Some are of the TBN kind, worshipers of fortune and gold, while others are of the C S Lewis/Emergent kind,

worshipers of experience. I was from the Emergent kind. I attended a large Vineyard church.

What I learned from while attending a Vineyard church was that God desires to save everyone. Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God in the flesh, died for everyone. Because He is both God and a man, His blood was therefore worth the blood of every human being, because God is at least worth all of His creation.

Had you asked me at this time whether I believed I was saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, I would have answered yes with a hearty amen. Absolutely I believed I had been saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Not by us, not by us, not by us, oh Lord, but by Your mercy and grace alone. I sang it virtually every Sunday.

The problem with this is that I could not live with it. I found myself doubting again and again whether I was really saved. Christ had shed His blood for me and for every human being on earth, hadn't He? Why then don't I feel secure in the knowledge of that?

At the time I could not articulate the real problem, which would much later emerge as a question. If Christ's blood was worth the blood of every human being, then why didn't His death save every human being? Rather than asking that question though, I instead kept struggling to assure myself that His blood was enough to have saved me.

I tried to sin less, and I devoted more of my time to outreach and evangelism. I prayed more. Studied my Bible more. But nothing worked. I could not quiet the doubt that plagued me. God loves me, He loves everyone He even loves people in Hell. Then why are they in Hell? What is the difference between me and them?

My pastors rebuffed me when I asked them to preach more doctrine and less practical stuff. They told me the will of God is that I do His deeds (which meant doing even more outreach and evangelism). It had never occurred to me that Christ had not died for everyone. In the entire twenty-two years I spent with the Vineyard, I had never heard the idea even mentioned. I had no clue of definite atonement. Instead, I took it for granted as an absolute fact that Christ had died for everyone. And the doubt continued to manifest itself in an ever increasing feeling of despair and exhaustion. All my efforts to assure myself that I was saved finally culminated in the decision to stop attending church altogether, and to just give up on the whole of Christianity. It was a neat story, it was a good story, but the problem with it was that it just didn't work.

I will spare you the story of how I came to hear the gospel for the first time. The point is that God did bring me to hear it. And the first time I heard it, I was angry. How on earth could God not love everyone He had created. How could He create some people with the intent to send them to Hell? What kind of God is this?

But the more I pondered it, and the more I studied Scripture in view of it, the more I came to realize the sheer sense and beauty of it. It had right there the whole time in the pages of my Bible, in all those passages that I had skipped over because they hadn't made sense. They made sense now.

I was corresponding by email with a friend I had met at a sovereign grace church that I had recently begun attending. My friend continued to patiently work with me, explaining the gospel to me again and again. At the same time, I was also reading Herman Hoeksema's Reformed Dogmatics. One day, while studying the epistle to the Hebrews, things just suddenly clicked, and I found myself finally able to articulate the problem I had been struggling with this entire time.

I had been struggling with assurance, because the gospel I had believed up until that point was unable to give it. There is no assurance to be found in a Christ who died for everyone. If Christ died for everyone, but not everyone is saved, then His death cannot possibly be the sole cause of salvation. There had to be something in addition to His blood that I did or am doing that made the blood of Christ effect salvation. Saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone was only true if I managed to keep doing what was required to make the Christ alone count.

The gospel though, the real gospel, the one and only true gospel, cannot be understood as grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone without the truth of God's sovereignty and the propitiatory justice of definite atonement. It is only within the context of definite atonement and God's sovereignty that grace is truly grace.

God is a just and righteous God. In His holiness, He demands the death of the sinner. This is His holy demand for justice. His justice must be satisfied. We have all sinned, therefore, He must demand the death of all of us. God cannot overlook this. He cannot pretend as though this isn't true.

In addition to this, from eternity, God chose to glorify His mercy and grace by choosing from eternity a select group of people whom in time He would save by the shed blood of His Son. From eternity, God also chose to glorify His holiness and wrath by choosing from eternity a select group of people whom He would not save, but condemn instead to eternal destruction. The Bible calls these two groups of people vessels prepared for honor and vessels prepared for dishonor (Romans 9). It also calls them elect and reprobate, as well as sheep and goats.

This selection to election was not based upon anything we do or would do. Rather, it was exclusively God's own choice. From before the foundation of the earth, He chose to save some,

and He chose to damn others. His choice was dependant upon His own sovereign will alone.

In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a virgin, to die the death that God demanded of His elect for their sins. God imputed (charged) to Christ all the sins of His elect (2 Corinthians 5:21). When Christ died for His elect, He died the death that God demanded of His elect.

And that is the point. Christ died only for His elect. He did not die for everyone. He satisfied God's demand for justice on behalf of His elect by dying the death that God demanded of them. It is upon this basis alone that God must now justify them. His holy demand for justice demands of Him that He justify them. If He does not, then He is not righteous.

Saved by God who glorified His grace and mercy by giving His Son to die for His elect alone, has guaranteed the salvation of His elect alone by satisfying His demand for justice on their behalf alone.

Had you asked me all those years ago whether I believed this, you would have had me stumbling all over myself.

So what's the problem then? The problem today is that there are a whole lot of Calvinists today who do not believe grace in view of belief in definite atonement is necessary. They think that as long as you understand you were saved by grace alone, then you can be assured that you are saved, even if you deny definite atonement.

Worse still, they accuse you of hyper Calvinism if you attempt to correct them. They also accuse you of making perfect knowledge the basis of salvation.

But David, why then don't we find the apostles preaching knowledge of definite atonement as

part of the gospel in the book of Acts? Because Paul didn't have Andrew Fuller in his ear telling him about his warped governmental theory of atonement. Because Peter didn't have Jacob Arminius in his ear telling him that faith is what makes a person elect. Mostly though, because the people in Acts already understood the truth about election, and therefore knew that Christ did not die for everyone. Why don't we find the apostles explaining election in the book of Acts? Because the People already understood it!

People today no longer understand it. Most have never even heard of it. Until they believe it, there is no bridge between them and me, but only an immeasurable gulf that can never be bridged. Unless God transports them to this side of the cross, they will remain on their side, marching steadily along on the road to their destruction.

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What Did Our Substitute Do?

Gary Shepherd

Long before the law was given by Moses, our whole race fell when Adam fell in the garden of Eden. Adam, a representative man, sinned against God and in him "all sinned." (Rom. 5:12) This is why "death reigned from Adam to Moses." But the penalty for sin against God is far more than physical death. Sin cannot be reversed, it must be punished. The penalty God requires for sin is death, a death that will satisfy divine justice. "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4) "For the wages of sin is death..." (Rom. 6:23)

That penalty must be paid. It cannot be paid by a sinner but requires the death of a sinless sacrifice. Every picture in the Old Testament sacrifices shows this. Christ, if He be that "one sacrifice for sins forever," must be such. If He be our

Substitute, He must do the one thing God could not do from heaven, He must die. If you think of all that God did, can do and does from heaven, the one thing necessary to our salvation He could not do which is to die in our place. To do this He must become a man, take upon Himself a body and in that perfect body die as the Substitute for His sheep. "I lay down my life for the sheep." Our death can only be because of our sin. His death as One who knew no sin, is for sin. We are not called upon to try and enter into the depths of His sufferings. How could we who have known nothing but sin enter into the sufferings of Him who never knew sin? No, we are simply called upon to look to His death. To rest in what He accomplished for us as our Substitute. If He died for me the death required for my sin, I don't have to die. All He suffered, I do not know but I know He suffered all that was due me. My Substitute died in my place and I am a participant in His sufferings not because of what I feel about them but because God in grace views me "in Christ."

When He died for my sin, I died to sin. His death is the source of my life. This is the gospel emphasis: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Romans 8:34) Christ "died for the ungodly." God "commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." We were "justified by His blood." We were "reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

I don't expect to ever know the fullness of my Substitute's sufferings or be able to feel the depth of His agonies. But this is know because God has declared it, Christ my Substitute died in my place! "I need no other argument, I need no other plea, It is enough that Jesus died, And that He died for me."

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visiting www.sermonaudio.com/allsovergrace.

Turn My Eyes from Worthless Things

Jason K. Boothe

"Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways." -Psalm 119:37 (ESV)

Ask just about anyone on the street what it means to be a Christian and you will undoubtedly get replies like, "A Christian is someone who tries to be nice to other people, refrains from [your sinful practice here], and attends church services at least some of the time." Perhaps the more religiously inclined might add "accepting Jesus into your heart" for good measure. Ultimately, one would be hard pressed, very hard pressed, to find anyone who defines the Christian faith by what the Bible actually teaches.

Is a Christian merely a person who makes it to church meetings twice per year while trying to be nice to other people? Don't misunderstand the intention, here, beloved. Of course we seek to be friendly and hospitable to our neighbors. And it should go without saying that attending a solid, Gospel-preaching assembly is a wonderful blessing indeed! But, is hospitality, church attendance, or any other human work the dividing line between saved and lost, righteousness and unrighteousness, in the eyes of Almighty God?

The truth is, when trusted for righteousness, each and every human effort is certainly a worthless thing, incapable of making one just in the sight of God. Compared to God's absolute perfect standard clearly set forth in His own Law, we stand, right down to every man, woman, boy, and

girl, hopelessly undone, lost beyond all earthly measure. As lawbreakers, there is nothing we can offer God that can satisfy the righteous requirements of the Divine Lawgiver. We deserve death! This is the prescription for those who defy God's Law: "the soul that sins, it shall die!" (Ezekiel 20:18).

The penalty for breaking God's law is death, plain and simple. There is nothing you can do to change the outcome of the sentence. There is no grace afforded you in the great and terrible law of God. No amount of "not doing" what you've already done in violation of God's Law can undo the sin. You and I stand condemned already! Yet in spite of the clear teaching of Scripture, men try in vain to establish their own righteousness by clinging to worthless things!

Because God has caused them to believe the Gospel of God's grace in Christ (Psalm 110:3), Christians freely admit their righteousness does not come from themselves in any way, shape, or form (Jude 25; Philippians 3:3,9;). They have come to know the truth: everything in this world is but refuse, worthless things, compared to the finished work of Christ on behalf of the poor sinners to which He has granted faith and repentance. The Psalmist who cried to the Lord for strength to keep his eyes from worthless things, also understood that life comes only from God. And this life, beloved, flows from the Light of Life, Christ Jesus.

For what do you depend on for righteousness? Do you trust in your ability to sin differently than your neighbor? Do you take special pride in your unblemished church attendance record? Perhaps you trust in some emotional experience you once had years ago. Here is the truth of it: all of these

things are worthless, miserable physicians for the soul in need of true righteousness, true life.

Almighty God, who causes His people to be willing in the day of His power, grant to your children repentance from the worthless things, the dead works of righteousness to which we sinfully cling, that we may turn to Christ for all hope of righteousness and life eternal. Through Christ the Lord — Amen.

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Christ is the Believer's Sanctification.

Giovanni Camacho

Sanctification is positional in Christ, not a matter of progression. "And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord"" (1 Corinthians 1:30-31 ESV).

Christ is our sanctification. That term refers to being set aside by God, not some sort process by which God slowly but surely cleans us up. In Christ, the regenerated elect believer is totally clean, totally holy, not deficient in any manner.

One of my favorite passages—"Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty,

dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (Jude 1:24-25 ESV).

It is Christ who is ABLE to keep us from stumbling and present us as blameless before the throne of His Father-that blamelessness is a result of having been imputed with the righteousness of Christ. It is NO WAY added to by our so called “good works.”

“And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:10-14 ESV).

The last verse is our focus here-“For by a single offering (the cross) He (Christ) has perfected (past tense-that cross actually perfected) for all time (forever perfected by the single offering) those who are being sanctified (set aside).

It was the sacrifice of Christ that forever made perfect those who are being sanctified-His work made the elect perfect-acceptable before God. That statement of “those who are being sanctified” refers to the individual elect sinners who come to believe the gospel. “Being sanctified” refers to being set aside by God in time-they are saved during their lifetimes.

This verse is often used to support progressive sanctification because of that phrase “being sanctified.” It could sound like a present, on-going process, but it’s not, and the verse itself

tells you that-it is the single offering of Christ that perfected the elect. That death on the cross was the sole condition to bring the elect of God to glory. Man has no part to play in salvation. Upon hearing that good news of the death of Christ, the elect sinner now enters the rest being referred to Hebrews. That is the rest-that you cease from working, and rest fully in the confidence (Latin *con fide* or *with faith*) that the death of Christ fully and finally satisfied God.

Christ’s work is both our justification and sanctification. He did it all through His work on the cross

Now, the question then becomes about Paul’s instructions on how to live. Is living how Paul commands in the second part of most of his epistles a sign of “progressive sanctification?” If you’re doing that stuff, are you progressively being sanctified? No! Those lifestyle things are results of knowing that Christ has satisfied God-there are no further conditions to meet! Therefore, live in this manner.

Christ is all. Just rest in that. Fight to rest in that. Fight anything that tells you there is something for you to do now. Stand firmly on the testimony of God-“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” (Colossians 2:13-15 ESV).

The work of Christ is complete. There is nothing for the elect sinner to do or improve.

Giovanni Camacho is a Christian writer who resides in Denver, Colorado.

Christ Our Mediator

J.C. Philpot

**"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
1 Timothy 2:5**

No sooner has living faith embraced the Person of Jesus (and that is the first object which faith lays hold of), than it embraces him as the divinely-appointed Mediator. And how sweet and suitable is such a Mediator to a poor, sinful, crawling reptile, a wretch defiled, morning, noon, and night, with everything foul and filthy, who has broken the law of God a million times, and cannot keep it a single moment!

"How can I," argues the soul, "so full of sin and depravity, how can I approach with acceptance the great, glorious, and holy Jehovah? I cannot, I dare not!" But when it sees, by the eye of faith, a divinely-appointed Mediator, a glorious Intercessor, a great High Priest over the house of God: One that has shed his blood to put away sin; One who has righteousness to justify, and has a fullness of grace and glory to give to the poor, needy, and naked: as faith sees, as hope embraces, as love enjoys this, there is a coming to God through this divine Mediator; as the Apostle saith, "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

Our only access to God is through the Mediator whom he hath appointed. All your prayers, tears, sighs, and groans; all your religious thoughts, acts, and words are worthless, utterly worthless, unless perfumed by the intercession of the only-begotten Son of God. See to this point; and I would, in all affection, charge it upon your conscience, that you look well how you approach

the Father. Do you approach him through the Son of his love? Is there a solemn feeling in your heart, when you draw near to the throne, that you approach only through Jesus? Is there a believing reception of his atoning blood into your conscience as the only sacrifice that purges away sin, and of his justifying righteousness as the only robe of acceptance before God? See to it well, examine your conscience well upon the matter, for it is vital ground.

See that you approach the Father through the Son of his love, and through him alone; for depend upon it, if you approach in any other way, you are but a presumptuous professor; there is no holy fire burning on the altar of your soul; nor will any answer come down but through this divinely-appointed way.

J.C. Philpot was an English Baptist who preached in the early 19th century.

News and Events

SOVEREIGN GRACE BIBLE CONFERENCE

April 29-30, 2017 Saturday 3 PM and Sunday 10 AM

Gospel of Grace Ministries, Ross, Ohio

Preaching by Gary Shepherd and Jason Boothe

For more information, contact Pastor Scott Price at gospeldefense@gmail.com.

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