

# THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (09).

**September 30, 2007.**

## **Review.**

Please turn to *2Cor.5:16-21*. (**read**). The sinner is standing in God's court-room. God is the Judge. The sinner is guilty of breaking God's Law and condemned. His punishment is the second death, the lake of fire. (*Rev.20:14*). The Divine Judge cannot simply forgive the sinner with the wave of a hand. He cannot say to the sinner, "*I know you are guilty. But I am compassionate. So I forgive you. You are free to go.*" God is holy and just and cannot simply set aside His Law and the penalty demanded for breaking His Law. The sinner must be punished.

If the sinner is to be forgiven and set free, someone who is sinless, who is perfectly righteous, must take his place. That someone must take his guilt. That someone must take his condemnation and sentence. That someone must pay the full penalty the Law demands. This is what the Lord Jesus Christ did for the sinner. He is the incarnate sinless Son of God. He perfectly obeyed His Father on earth. He was without sin. He knew no sin. And He took the sinner's sin, guilt and condemnation. He paid the full penalty the Law demanded for the sinner's sins.

In our last study we looked in detail at Paul's statement in *2Cor.5:21*, "He (**God**) made Him (**Christ**) who knew no sin, sin on our behalf." This verse brings us into God's court-room. What transpired in God's court-room is purely legal. Our sins were taken from us and imputed to the account of the sinless Son of God. Our sins were taken from us and placed upon Him. *Isa.53:6* says, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (**ESV**). The result is that Christ came to stand in that relation with God which normally is the result of sin, estranged from God and the object of His wrath.

When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, that was no ordinary death. We saw in horrific detail what it meant that Christ was made sin for us when our sins were imputed to Him. When He died, the Roman and Jewish authorities put Him to death. But more importantly, it was God the Judge who put His Son to death. It was God who poured out His wrath upon His Son. *Isa.53:10* says, “the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief.” God’s Son was dying on our behalf, as our Substitute. God’s Son was enduring the Father’s judicial wrath on our behalf, as our Substitute. In those three hours of darkness, the Father compressed an eternity of punishment in the cup of His wrath which the Son drank to its last bitter drop. In those three hours the Lord Jesus Christ endured hell itself for our sakes.

**Harris** noted, “*Jesus died a death under the divine wrath that was deserved by sinners.*” **Barnett** wrote, “*The resolution of the divine displeasure at sin in the One who knew no sin being made sin is the basis of the divine reconciliation of those alienated from God by their sins.*” With this brief review, we come to continue our study of *2Cor.5:21*.

### **God Made Us Righteous.**

Paul wrote, “He (**God**) made Him (**Christ**) who knew no sin, sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (**Christ**).” As we noted in our last study we have two parallel statements here :

Christ knew no sin.	We are sinners (or, we <b>knew no righteousness</b> ).
God made Him sin.	We become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Harris** noted that what we have “*in this verse is a double imputation : sin was reckoned to Christ’s account, so that righteousness is reckoned to our account.*” Note carefully that God did not take our sins and place them upon Christ and then left us standing there. There was a purpose to His actions. The purpose is introduced by the

words “so that”. The purpose and desired result is that “we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” The desired result is achieved subsequent to Christ being made sin for us and dying in our place. But there is no questioning the fact that the desired result would be achieved.

Both verbs, “**made**” and “**become**” are aorist verbs that signify completed actions. From God’s standpoint the actions were completed : He was made sin for us. We have become the righteousness of God in Him. The imputation of our sins to Christ matches the imputation of His righteousness to us.

As we proceed, keep constantly in mind the words “in Him”. Everything that concerns our salvation was achieved “**in Christ**” and never apart from Christ. Next, I want you to note that “**sin**” and “**righteousness**” stand as opposites. The sin that was imputed to Christ was done in a legal sense. It was not done in an ethical and subjective sense. In the same manner the righteousness that is imputed to the sinner is done in a legal sense. It is not done in an ethical and subjective sense.

Paul’s words, “that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”, points to the change of status that accrues to the believer who is in Christ. To “become the righteousness of God” in Christ is to gain a right legal standing before God that God Himself bestows. It is to be clothed in Christ’s righteousness. It is to be constituted righteous in God’s court. It is to be declared righteous in God’s court. This here is our justification in Christ. This here is the reversal of the condemnation that was pronounced against us. This here is the basis by which we are forgiven all our sins in Christ. This here is the basis on which we are reconciled to God.

This is what Paul spoke about in *Phil.3:9* when he said he wanted to be found in Christ, “not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.” In *vs.8* Paul came to realize that all his Law-keeping righteousness, all his good

works were “**rubbish**” in God’s eyes. He discovered his righteousness was corrupted by his fallen nature and filthiness in God’s eyes.

The self-righteous Pharisee discovered, like Joshua the high priest, that he was not wearing garments that were righteous but garments that were filthy. He discovered that his own righteousness would only bring upon him God’s condemnation and wrath. He realized that if he stood before God in his own righteousness he would be hopelessly lost. His only hope was the righteousness which God bestows on the basis of faith. What Paul needed is what every human being needs. We cannot come to God with our own righteousness and hope to be accepted by God. The only way God will accept us is if we come before Him clothed in Christ’s righteousness.

Now Brethren, I want to back up a bit and say some things to you that may seem repetitious. But I need to because I want to ensure that you fully and clearly understand these issues concerning forgiveness. **Firstly**, the forgiveness of sins that we must preach in Jesus’ name is a legal transaction. God is dealing with us as the Divine Judge and not as our Heavenly Father. The basis of this forgiveness is God imputing our sins to Christ and God imputing to us the righteousness of Christ. This is the great, glorious, amazing, astounding exchange that is the basis of our forgiveness in Christ, our justification in Christ, our salvation in Christ. The completion of this imputation transaction, of this great exchange, is irreversible. As we shall see shortly, there is no one who can appeal the divine judicial decision that is made for us.

When we stand in God’s court, God, the Divine Judge, declares us righteous because we are now clothed in the righteousness of His Beloved Son. God the Divine Judge reverses the sentence of condemnation and declares that we are forgiven because His Son took our sins upon Himself. Once again, I must point out that these judicial declarations are irreversible. The declaration that you are justified, that you are righteous, and that you are forgiven has nothing to do with how you feel. I emphasize, the transaction and declarations are irreversible legal acts.

**Secondly**, this forgiveness unto salvation is once for all. Hold your questions because we are not dealing with sanctification. We are dealing with justification. Your justification in Christ cannot be repeated. Your justification in Christ is not an ongoing process like sanctification. So just follow me. This forgiveness unto salvation is once for all. When this forgiveness is granted, all your sins, past present and future are taken into consideration and dealt with. All your sins are removed. All your sins are washed away. All your sins are taken away. The records of all your sins are wiped clean. The files of all your sins are deleted. The debt you owed because of sin is cancelled. Your record is now stamped **“righteous”**. It is stamped **“paid in full”**.

Consider with me the following verses :

*Isa.43:25*, “I, even I, am the One who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”

*Isa.44:22*, “I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist.”

Note the verb “I have wiped.” It is the same verb **“blot”** that David used in *Psa.51:1* when he prayed, “According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.” The imagery here is that when God wipes out our sins, they are no longer seen.

*Psa.130:4-5*, “If You, Lord should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.” If God kept the record of our sins, if God kept tallying up our sins in order to hold us accountable for them, who would be able to stand? No one! Forgiveness means God has ceased to keep a record of our sins. If you do not have forgiveness in Christ your sins are marked and God will hold you accountable for them.

In *2Cor.5:19* Paul said God is “not counting” our trespasses against us. We have noted in the past that this is an accountant’s word. The accountant makes a record of your debts in order to ensure that you pay. When God forgives, He does two things : **(1)**

He erases the debt; (2) He does not make nor keep any new records of sins. In *Col.2:13-14* Paul wrote, "He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us **all** our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." The verb "**forgiven**" focuses on the graciousness of what God has done for us in Christ. Note the word "**all**". It means "**all**". It does not mean "**all**" at the point of your conversion. It means "**all**". The verb "**cancelled**" means to wash, to wipe clean, to cancel, to annul.

I want you to clearly understand that your forgiveness in Christ unto salvation is a once for all act. It is an unrepeatable act. It is an irreversible act. In that moment there is not one sin, past, present or future, that is not dealt with. If you live for **100** years after the date of your conversion, it would not matter. God knows every sin you would commit and they have been dealt with already. This is why you are saved. This is why you cannot lose your salvation in Christ.

**Thirdly**, when, as a Christian, you stand in God's final court for the final judgment, you will not be judged with respect to sin or salvation. In a real sense, you faced God the Judge already. You faced Him the day you were saved. In that final court your record will be clean. Remember, your record will be stamped "**paid in full**" and "**righteous**". Jesus said in *Jn.3:18*, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Note the verb "**judge**". The idea in it is judging in order to condemn. What Jesus said may be properly translated, "He who believes is not condemned." The one who believes in Jesus will not be brought to judgment and will not be condemned because his sins have been dealt with. But the one who does not believe is under condemnation because his sins have not been dealt with. And if he dies in that condition he will face the Divine Judge knowing that his condemnation is only a matter of formality.

Please turn to **Rom.8**. Paul wrote in **vs.1**, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” No judicial condemnation now and no judicial condemnation in the final judgment. Why? If you are in Christ Jesus, all your sins were imputed to Him and His righteousness was imputed to you. He took your condemnation. This is why there is no condemnation for you. Now note **vs.31**. Paul wrote, “What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” Are you a Christian? If you are, God is for you. Why is God for you? The answer is in **vs.32**. (**read**). God is for you because Christ died. God is for you because God did not spare His Son when He died for your sins. Christ paid in full for every single sin in your life. God is for you because you are clothed in the righteousness of His Son.

In **vs.33** Paul asked, “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect?”, that is, “*who will bring a charge of sin in God’s court or in the final judgment against God’s elect?*” No one can bring such a charge. Why? Paul’s answer is, “God is the One who justifies.” God is the one who has declared you righteous in His court. And this divine legal verdict cannot be appealed and can never be overthrown. **Tom Schreiner** wrote, “*Believers can face the judgment day with confidence, for those whom God has chosen as His own will certainly not be accused on the day of judgment. God has declared them to be right in His sight, and thus those who would accuse believers will not successfully establish their case.*”

In **vs.34** Paul asked another question that is closely related to the question he asked in **vs.33**. Paul asked, “who is the one who condemns?” Without a doubt there are many who will try to condemn us. Our critics, our detractors, our enemies, the devil and his demons, they all will try to condemn us. Sometimes our own heart tries to condemn us. Now we may reason that if the charge of sin cannot stand because of justification, neither would the condemnation be able to stand. But Paul does not leave the answer to human logic. Paul’s answer to the second question goes to the very heart of the issue. The question is, “who is the one who condemns?” And the emphatic answer is, “Christ Jesus is He who died.” **Morris** wrote, “*The impossibility of condemnation is*

*shown by the fact that it is Christ who died. His death removes the possibility of condemnation for those who are in Him.”*

Now Brethren, this brings us to our fourth point in which I want to raise a very important question : Is this doctrine of God’s free grace in the forgiveness of our sins a dangerous doctrine? Does this doctrine open the door for a licentious free-for-all kind of living? I mean, after all, if you know that all you future sins have already been forgiven, regardless of what they are, what kind of door does that open to you? If you have fully understood the truth I have preached today, you will be asking these questions. There are whole denominations that fear these doctrines of God’s free grace and will not preach them because they fear a licentious lifestyle would surface among their church members. It is for this reason also that they do not preach the truth of the permanence of your salvation, the truth the old theologians called **“the preservation of the saints.”** Amazingly, however, their goal is not achieved. Preaching and teaching doctrines that are not God’s revealed truths do not prevent people from living a licentious lifestyle.

I preach these truths as they are unfolded in God’s word because I am commanded by God to preach the Word, His word. (*2Tim.4:2*). I cannot preach the ideas and precepts of men as the word of God. To do so is to invalidate the word of God. To do so is to preach vanity. And Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for doing such things. (*Matt.15:1-9*). I am required by God to teach and preach to you the whole purpose of God and not to shrink back from teaching you anything that is profitable for your soul. (*Acts 20:20, 27*).

I preach these truths as they are unfolded in God’s word because I want to see you set free from all fear with regards to the final judgment and the eternal preservation of your soul in Christ. I want to see you come to experience the joy of the Lord which is your strength. (cf. *Neh.8:10*). I preach these truths because I want you to experience the quality of salvation rest Christ promised you in *Matt.11:28-30*, “Come unto Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you

and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

I do not fear to preach this great and glorious truth about the irreversible once-for-all forgiveness of your sins in Christ unto salvation because of the doctrine of repentance. The Lord Jesus commanded us to preach “repentance for forgiveness of sins ... in His name.” (*Lk.24:47*). This is exactly what the apostles did. I am going to give you some homework today. Firstly, what is repentance? Get out whatever books you have and try to formulate an answer to this question : what is repentance?

The second reason I do not fear to preach forgiveness is because of *Psa.130:3-4*. Your second assignment is to read carefully, try to understand and meditate upon these two verses and work out some kind of application for your life.

In closing, if you are not a Christian, I want to speak to you. I want you to clearly understand that it is only Biblical Christianity that teaches that God completely forgives all of the sinner’s sins in this life. If you are waiting for the final judgment to see if, for whatever reasons, your sins will be forgiven, you are wasting your time. We have seen already that Jesus made it plain in *Jn.3:18* that if you are not forgiven in this life, then you are going to the final judgment already condemned.

The only basis upon which you can be forgiven your sins is the death of Christ. You cannot secure the forgiveness of your sins any other way. As a sinner, you are a law-breaker. You are guilty of breaking God’s laws. The penalty for breaking God’s laws is death. The wages of sin is death. This death is the second death, that is, the lake of fire. The choice you face is simple : either you pay the penalty with your own death in the lake of fire for all eternity, or a qualified substitute take your place and pay the penalty for you. This substitute must be sinless. There is only one qualified substitute, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God.

Do you want the forgiveness of your sins? Then you must turn to the Lord Jesus Christ who has died for sinners. You must turn to Him in repentance and faith, putting your trust in Him to save you. Apart from this, you have absolutely no hope of salvation in this life or in the final judgment. Salvation in Christ is free. It is God's free gift to you in Christ. On the other hand hell is eternal. Now understand this : if you reject God's free gift of salvation in Christ, it means that you are working hard and diligently to go to hell. There is only one way to God and eternal life. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (*Jn.14:6*).

I urge you, flee from the condemnation you are under. Flee from God's eternal wrath. Turn to the Lord Jesus Christ today and be saved.