



How Did I Miss This?

...the meaning and reality of reconciliation

Bible Teacher Curt Crist

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Preface

"Welcome To Grace" ministries, located in the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina, is dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel of the Grace of God and to the study of God's word "Rightly Divided" as we are instructed to do by Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, in the following two Scriptures: Second Corinthians chapter 5, verses 19 through 21: *"To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we beg you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* Second Timothy chapter 2, verse 15: *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

This booklet presents the subject of Reconciliation as taught by Pastor and Bible Teacher, Curt Crist. It is hoped that God will use it to help many in Christendom today--who believe that their works are needed to gain or maintain a "right" standing before God--to understand the doctrine of reconciliation as revealed by the Apostle Paul.

All scripture references are from the King James Version of the Bible. Where necessary, the original Greek or Hebrew words have been defined for a better understanding in today's English. Italicized words in the Scriptures quoted were supplied by the translators of the King James Version for readability. Bracketed text is for clarification. Words underlined or in boldface are for emphasis.

Recordings of Pastor Crist's lessons in both video and audio are free upon request. Media copies are available in standard CD for audio and standard DVD for video. You may download MP3 audio from our website, www.welcometograce.com. Messages are also broadcast live via the Roku channel "Welcome to Grace" on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am Eastern Time and are available shortly thereafter for viewing at your leisure. Additional information of interest is available on the website, including downloadable PDF files of messages, charts, and maps used and referenced in these booklets.

If you have benefitted from this booklet or any of the "Welcome to Grace" ministries, we encourage you to let us know by writing, e-mailing, or telephoning us. If you would like to share in the ministry financially so that others may benefit as well, you may include a check with your letter to us or use the "Donate" button on the website which will link you to "PayPal," which accepts personal credit cards or transfers from your bank account.

Sincerely, In His Service,

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How Did I Miss This?

Have you ever wondered what it takes to have God on your side? What does He require for heaven? God knows everything we think, say, and do. And so is He continually judging whether our actions and attitudes are right or wrong? Can it ever become too late to make amends for our sins? My conscience told me that God was keeping score and I knew that no matter how hard I tried, I would always come up short.

A False Perception

Three questions must be answered: What does it take to gain forgiveness for sins? Is there a limit to God's forgiveness? What is required to make us acceptable to Him?

Many solutions have been offered:

- *You must try your best to be a good person.*
- *You must keep the commandments.*
- *You must join a church and be baptized.*
- *You must commit your life to Christ.*
- *You must come to the front and pray that God will save you.*
- *You must repent of your sins and commit to stop sinning.*
- *You must repeat the sinner's prayer.*
- *You must ask Jesus to come into your heart.*
- *You must make Jesus the Lord of your life.*
- *You must maintain a personal relationship with the Lord.*
- *You must live for the Lord.*

Not knowing which of those requirements would satisfy God, I tried to do them all. Still I felt the need to do more. Sin management was always on my mind. No matter the direction I took to gain salvation, I knew that sin was my ever-present companion. Then after believing I had been saved, I wondered what would be the consequences of my future sins. It seemed that Satan was always working to keep me on his side.

Second Corinthians chapter 11, verses 14 and 15 shows Satan in a totally different light than most of us imagine:

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." II Cor. 11:14-15

It should come as no surprise that Satan is a deceiver. But how could Satan be deceiving people through **ministers of righteousness**? What would be their role? Could Satan's poisonous message be coming through religion?

Deception was Satan's intention from the point of his rebellion as Scripture tells us in Isaiah chapter 14, verses 13 and 14:

"For thou [Lucifer, now called Satan] hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the most High [God].**" Is. 14:13-14

Satan imitates God, so it only stands to reason that he has designed his message of salvation to appear to be the right one. After all, the Scripture says that his message comes from ministers of righteousness. Was I a victim of Satan's message?

Am I Really Saved?

I pictured God as sitting in a judgment chair in heaven, waiting to decide whether or not to save me. I wanted that decision to be YES. But I was led to believe that God would save me only **IF** I approached Him and behaved in the proper manner. These questions were constantly on my mind: Did God really save me in the first place? When did my salvation take place? Would Satan (the great counterfeiter) want me to rely upon a religious experience?

Man's Problem: Agape versus ME, MYSELF

The Bible tells us that God is love. In fact, God defines that word. Love, from human perspective, is quite different from love from God's perspective. **Agape** (ah-gop-ay) **love**, (a type of love spoken of in the Bible), is always directed toward others rather than self. Furthermore, *agape* love is a sacrificial love that prefers others above self. The proof of God's love is evident in the giving of His

Son to the world and in the sacrifice the Son of God made for the entire world of sinners at Calvary. Christ gave himself for us by taking the sins of the world upon himself when he hung upon the cross. In First Corinthians chapter 15, verses 3 and 4, God's Word tells us that Christ died FOR OUR SINS:

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins** according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." I Cor. 15:3-4

Do any of us love enough to die in another's place? I'm sure many would die for a family member; and certainly most would die to protect their children; some would even die for a friend. But God's **agape love** goes far beyond that.

Think of the soldiers who have sacrificed their lives to save their friends. Is that not love? Surely it is! Yet what soldier would be willing to sacrifice his life for the enemy? **But is that not precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us?** Romans chapter 5, verse 10 says,

"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." Rom 5:10

Does this mean that WE were reconciled to God by the death of His Son WHILE we were God's enemies? The answer, according to the verse we just read, is YES.

Do you remember the Amish tragedy of 2005? The Amish, we are told, are an extremely forgiving people. The following report appeared in newspapers a year later:

"ONE year ago today, a shooter entered a one-room Amish school in Nickel Mines, PA., dismissed all but 10 girls, and fired at them execution-style, killing five before shooting himself. Within hours, the Amish community forgave the killer and his family. News of the instant forgiveness stunned the outside world almost as much as the incident itself did.

As the father of a slain daughter explained, 'Our forgiveness was not our words, it was what we did.' Members of the community visited the gunman's widow at her home with food and flowers and hugged members of his family. Amish people also contributed to a fund for the shooter's family."

The people of that Amish community are certainly to be commended for their loving attitude. I believe we could all agree that the love they expressed to the family members of the one who had just slain their daughters went far beyond what most of us would do in that same circumstance. Would we be so forgiving?

Many would cry out for justice to be served--life in prison, if not the death penalty. Yet those suffering Amish parents expressed their forgiveness for the offender even if he had lived and not asked for forgiveness. However, would any of those Amish fathers, mothers, or family members been willing to take the place of that murderer of their children if he had lived and been sentenced to be executed for his crime? Would any of those Amish parents have allowed another of their children to be executed in the place of the killer? Does the love of any human being, save for the God-man Jesus Christ, measure up to God's *agape* love? This is what the Apostle Paul was talking about when he said in Romans chapter 3, verse 23:

"For all have sinned, and come [are continually coming] short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23

No one measures up to God's love, nor does anyone measure up to His standard of righteousness. We ALL are coming desperately short, thus our need for a Savior.

ME, MYSELF, is the opposite of **Agape** and is a dreaded disease. Everything we hear, everything we say, and everything we do is filtered through that sieve called **ME, MYSELF**. "How did what was just said affect me? How did it make me feel? Did that person validate me? Has my ego been injured? What do I have to gain or lose in order to maintain a relationship with this person?"

We hold some people near and dear while at the same time we keep others at a distance. It's not that we can help it, for it's the ME, MYSELF disease within us. We each sit on the throne of our own life.

When it comes to measuring up to WHO GOD IS (that is, when our thoughts, words, and deeds are weighed according to His glory and His righteousness,) the entire human race is helpless and hopeless. No one measures up to God!

God's Answer to Man's Sin Dilemma

What I had missed for so many years had been right there in God's Word all along. This passage in Second Corinthians chapter 5, verses 18 and 19 tells us how God's justice has been resolved where man's sin problem is concerned:

“And all things are of God, who **hath reconciled us** to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us **the ministry of reconciliation**; To wit, [that is to say] that God was in Christ, **reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them**; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”

2 Cor. 5:18-19

If what God inspired the Apostle Paul to write in these verses is correct, and we can be certain that it is, then God is not imputing (counting or reckoning) the sins of the world to the world of sinners today. This begs the question: **Are we to be telling the unsaved that God IS continuing to hold their sins against them but that He can cease doing so?** Was that the message committed to the Apostle Paul, and to us, to take to the world? Or, as Paul has so clearly stated, are we to tell the unsaved of the world that **God was in Christ, reconciling THEM to Himself, and that He is NOT imputing THEIR trespasses unto THEM?**

A simple but careful reading of this marvelous passage provides the answer. Let's read it once again: Second Corinthians chapter 5, verse 19:

“...God was in Christ, **reconciling the world unto himself, NOT imputing THEIR trespasses unto THEM**; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” II Cor. 5:19

As you can see, the Apostle Paul called this good news from God "**the word [message] of reconciliation**" because this is the message God has commissioned all who have come to accept the truth of the successfulness of His Son's cross work to take to those who have not yet heard this glorious good news. **Jesus Christ bore the punishment of their sins upon Himself, and that punishment was death. He bore all mankind's sin and their punishment of death (Romans chapter 6, verse 23,) when they were "yet enemies."**

It is this "word of reconciliation" that we are to take to the world, and it is this "word of reconciliation" that Paul refers to as "**the glorious gospel of the blessed God**" as noted in First Timothy chapter 1, verse 11. Paul also referred to this message as "**the gospel of Christ**" in Romans chapter 11, verse 6, in Second Corinthians chapter 4, verse 4, and as "**my gospel**" in Romans chapter 16, verse 25, where he says,

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began but now is made known." Rom. 16:25

Why is God not imputing the sins of the world unto the sinners of the world today? God provided the answer in Second Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21, where he says,

"For he [God the Father] hath made him [Jesus Christ] **to be sin for us, who** [Christ] knew no sin; [so] that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." II Cor. 5:21

God's Great Transfer

The reason God is not counting (imputing) men's sins against them is because He counted (imputed) the sins of all mankind against His Son. When Christ was made to be sin FOR (in place of) the world, He suffered the Father's judgment against all of mankind's sin, past, present, and future. It's as simple as that.

In other words, God the Father transferred (imputed, which means "assigned to the account") all the sins of mankind to Jesus Christ at Calvary. **Christ died FOR those sins in that God meted out upon His Son the punishment those sins deserved.** There has never been a greater sacrifice than the sacrifice the Son of God made when he died FOR OUR SINS upon the cross.

The sin debt of all mankind has been entirely paid, and Jesus Christ is the one who paid it. The Apostle John wrote these words by the inspiration of God in First John chapter 2, verse 2:

"And he [Christ] is the propitiation for our [Israel's] sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." I John 2:2

And in First John chapter 4, verse 10:

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I John 4:10

The word translated "propitiation" in John's first epistle comes from the word meaning "**compensation**." It means "**a fully satisfying payment**," as the Apostle Paul wrote in First Timothy chapter 2, verse 6:

"Who gave himself **a ransom** [a payment] for all, to be testified in due time." I Tim. 2:6

Did Christ make a sufficient payment? According to God's Word, he did. **The fact that no future payments for sin would be necessary (or permitted) is the reason we read in Hebrews chapter 9, verse 26:**

"For then [if future payments were necessary] must he [Christ] often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **once** in the end of the world [age] hath he appeared to **put away sin by the sacrifice of himself**." Heb. 9:26

If everything we've read here is true, the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished everything He set out to do. He put away the sins of the world when He sacrificed Himself for those sins. We might also note these words written in Hebrews chapter 1, verse 3:

"Who [Christ] being the brightness of his [the Father's] glory, and the express image of his [God the Father's] person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he [Christ Jesus] had **by himself purged our sins**, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3

If Christ had not accomplished what his cross work was designed to accomplish where the sins of the world are concerned, then the **risen, ascended Lord of glory** would NOT be sitting "on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The fact that we serve a "risen ascended Savior" is proof that Christ was successful in what he had come to do. The Apostle Paul called this good news "**the glorious gospel of Christ**."

The word "gospel" simply means "good news." Could the world ever be given news better than this? As God has put those sins

away forever, it is no longer an issue of what God CAN DO where men's sins are concerned, but rather an issue of what God's Son, Jesus Christ, has already done.

What It All Means

It is an unfathomably wonderful message to know that all the sins of all the world were paid for by Jesus Christ, God's Son. Does this mean that everyone will go to heaven? The answer is NO. This good news must be BELIEVED in order for one to dwell with the Savior. **At the point of one's belief, another great transfer takes place--the transfer necessary for everlasting life with our Lord.** This is NOT the transfer of our sins to Christ. As we read in Hebrews chapter 1, verse 3, that transfer took place over 2,000 years ago. Here it is once more:

"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." Heb. 1:3

This is a transfer of a different kind.

To explain this great transfer, we might think back to Adam and Eve after their rebellion in the garden. When Adam rebelled against God, (and Adam willingly did so), God supplied a sacrifice for Adam and Eve's transgression. That sacrifice was an animal sacrifice that pictured an innocent victim's blood having been shed as it died for (or in place of) the guilty. It was God's picture of Calvary.

We should also note that even before his rebellion in the garden, Adam had not measured up to the righteousness belonging to God. While God is incapable of being corrupted, Adam and Eve were corruptible human beings. **Transferring their transgression to the one being sacrificed on their behalf was one thing; being made as righteous as God Himself was another thing altogether.**

Do you remember what Adam and Eve set out to do when they realized their unrighteous condition? They sewed fig leaves together in an attempt to appear righteous before God. We might call their futile efforts "fig-leaf righteousness." Unfortunately, fig-leaf righteousness is still being conducted. All over the world people are

trying to cover their unrighteous condition through various types of sacrifices, good works, and religious rites done for the purpose of making themselves appear righteous before God. However, God refused to accept a similar attempt by Adam and Eve in the garden. Instead, **He clothed them**--covered their nakedness--in the skins of the sacrifice He provided for them as we see in Genesis chapter 3, verse 21:

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Gen. 3:21

It is clear by this Scripture that Adam and Eve's attempt to appear righteous hadn't worked in God's sight. In like manner, the attempts of people to appear righteous before God today through their religious works will not make them any more righteous before God than had the fig-leaf efforts of our first parents in the garden.

In order for Adam and Eve to appear righteous before God, He had to do something for them. According to the Scripture we've just read, God was the One who had to clothe them. And the same is true today. In order to be righteous before God, we must be "clothed in the skins of His sacrifice." This is not something we must, or can, do for ourselves, or for God, but something that God does for us.

How does this clothing take place? What is the clothing? Who is clothed upon?

The issue of who paid the price to take our sins away having already been settled--the accomplishment of Christ at Calvary--the question now becomes, "Who will God clothe in the skins of the sacrifice that died for that person's sins?" The answer is, ONLY those who believe that Christ successfully paid the price to take their sins away at Calvary. **Only those who believe the Bible's "good news" concerning Christ's accomplishment at Calvary are "baptized INTO Christ."**

Being baptized INTO Christ is a miraculous spiritual transaction performed by God the Holy Spirit when one believes the Gospel of Christ. This is not a baptism that is felt, seen, or heard, nor does this baptism have anything to do with water. This spiritual baptism is nonetheless true, for as the Bible records in First Corinthians chapter 12, verse 13:

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." I Cor. 12:13

You might wonder how this baptism performed by the Holy Spirit is connected to the "clothing" mentioned earlier. The Apostle Paul provides the answer in Galatians chapter 3, verse 27, where he says:

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have **put on** Christ." Gal. 3:27

It is this "spiritual baptism" (identification) INTO Christ that joins all believers to the person of the Savior. This is how God is able to make the judicial decree that those who have believed the Gospel of Christ are as righteous as the God-man himself. The Bible tells us that in a marriage, two individuals become "one flesh." This one-flesh relationship is true of all who have trusted that Christ paid their sin debt at Calvary, was buried, and rose from the dead. The Apostle Paul speaks of this "one flesh" relationship in Ephesians chapter 5, verses 30 and 31, where we read,

"For we [believers] are members of his [Christ's] body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Eph. 5:30-31

From a legal standpoint, what belongs to one member of the marriage relationship belongs to the other. This is equally true for those who are joined to Christ. In our "oneness with him," what belongs to our Savior now belongs to those who are joined to the Savior, and one of the things that belongs to Jesus Christ is perfect righteousness. Speaking of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter said in First Peter chapter 2, verse 22:

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." I Pet 2:22

This brings us right back to our passage in Second Corinthians chapter 5, verses 18 through 21, in which we learned that God is not imputing the sins of the world to the world of sinners. It was God's plan to join believers to His Son before the foundation of the world. And so what belongs to God the Son now belongs to those who are "one with the Son." You might think of it as having Christ's

test score for righteousness transferred to the test papers of all who have believed. Christ's righteousness is freely attributed (imputed) to the account of anyone and everyone who believes that what Christ came to do at Calvary--put away their sins--He accomplished successfully as proven by his resurrection from the dead. This is what Paul was talking about in Second Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21. Let's read it again:

"For he [God the Father] hath made him [Jesus Christ] to be sin **for** us [in our place,] who knew no sin; [so] **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**." II Cor. 5:21

Where were YOUR sins dealt with?

God dealt with your sins when the Son of God died on the cross of Calvary (on your behalf), paying the price FOR your sins. Christ appeared on earth to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" according to Scripture. God's Son accomplished what He came to do. Your sins were judged successfully when Christ was judged for them. **All of God's work to save you has already been done, and Christ is the One who has done it at Calvary.**

When you believe that God reconciled YOU to Himself through His Son's death, burial, and resurrection on YOUR behalf, the Holy Spirit performs a miracle in your life by JOINING you to the Savior who died for your sins and was buried and rose from the dead. Being "**IN CHRIST**" is how God MADE YOU to be His own righteousness. **If you are IN HIM, Christ's righteousness is now YOUR righteousness.**

God's mind is forever settled as to the all-sufficiency of the cross work of His Son to have "**put away sins**." On that, God's mind will never, and can never, change. The only minds that need changing now are the minds of those who have yet to accept what God believes to be true about the justice-resolving accomplishment of the cross work of His Son where their sins are concerned. The entire world has been reconciled to God by the death of His Son for ALL sins. The Apostle Paul could not have penned God's words and thoughts any more clearly than he did in Colossians chapter 1, verse 21, when he said:

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in **your mind** by wicked works, **yet now hath he reconciled** [past tense], **in the body of His flesh through death**." Col. 1:21

This tells us that God is neither waiting to save people nor expecting something further to be done for their sins. Rather, He is waiting for those for whom His Son died (all mankind) to **believe** in their minds that which is true in His mind. The Apostle Paul spoke to the issue of **believing** in Second Corinthians chapter 5, verse 20, when he said:

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." II Cor. 5:20

The moment one takes God at His Word by faith--that God ceased counting his sins against him when His Son paid for the sins of the world at Calvary and was buried and rose from the dead--that one is immediately placed INTO Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. **That one is thereby justified--declared to be righteous by a gift decree of God's justice--unto everlasting life with the Lord.**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ after His sacrificial death at Calvary is God's guarantee of the justice-resolving cross work of His Son where sins are concerned. **The sealing ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit is God's guarantee that those who have believed in Christ's accomplishment at Calvary can never be lost.** The apostle Paul penned these beautiful words telling us of God's unchangeable guarantee in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 13:

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, **ye were sealed** with that Holy Spirit of promise." Eph. 1:13

Have YOU taken God at His Word that Christ died for you at Calvary, was buried and rose again from the dead, putting your sins out of God's sight forever and proving that God was completely satisfied with the cross-work accomplishment of His Son? Accepting this "Truth" places you into Christ. God then imputes His own righteousness to your account and you are justified unto everlasting life. God's righteousness, through Christ Jesus the Lord, guarantees you have everlasting life in Him.

I hope you don't miss this. **Salvation in Christ is acquired and sealed forever by faith in what Christ has done for you, not for what you can do for yourself or for Him.**

The following verses from God's Word—the Bible—are referenced in this booklet and are recommended for memorization:

Genesis 3:21
Isaiah 14:13-14
Romans 1:16
Romans 3:23
Romans 5:10
Romans 6:23
Romans 11:6
Romans 16:25
I Corinthians 12:13
I Corinthians 15:3-4
II Corinthians 4:4
II Corinthians 5:18-21
II Corinthians 11:14-15
Galatians 3:27
Ephesians 1:13
Ephesians 5:30-31
Colossians 1:21
I Timothy 1:11
I Timothy 2:6
II Timothy 2:15
Hebrews 1:3
Hebrews 9:26
I Peter 2:22
I John 2:2
I John 4:10