

## The Great Exchange

This morning's study will be starting with our morning scripture reading, which, if you would like to follow along as we read, it will be coming from Philippians 3 verses 1-9. We will be starting our morning study there but we will also be looking at a lot of scripture as we explore the source of our Righteousness, what it is, what it provides and how it ties into other very important doctrines such as justification, redemption, salvation, substitution, imputation, reconciliation and so many other elements of our relationship with God. It won't be as much as it sounds like, we won't go into all of them but you will see them brought out through the different readings that we will be spending some time in. My intent and my hope is to look at four different waypoints, if you will, points that hopefully make clear the theme of this study which I have titled "The Great Exchange." In the first of these we will be looking at the imputation of Righteousness as it's presented to us in a letter by Paul to the Saints in Philippi.

Philippians 3 verses 1-9, is a good first passage of scripture to look at because the apostle Paul shines so much light on the subject of righteousness. He reveals to us his view point on the two different types of righteousness he has experienced, one a false righteousness born out of works and a stringent allegiance to the Law, and then the true righteousness, the righteousness of Christ that is of grace from our Lord God and it is free from the Law. So, let's begin our morning reading and then we will start applying it to our study for today. Philippians 3:1-9 reads,

***1. Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reasons for such confidence.***

***If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But***

***what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my -Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,9. and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith of Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.***

Paul begins by encouraging those he has written the letter to rejoice in the Lord. He reminds them that salvation comes through Christ, not by following Jewish customs wrapped up in the Law. He especially speaks of those mutilators of the flesh, those who want to preach false doctrines and harken back to law, adding legalism on top of the gospel. Circumcision often is used as a metaphor for the old testament law. What Paul is bringing out is the futility of circumcision of the flesh and falling back into the Law which provides no true righteousness. The mixing of the law and the gospel is mutilation of the flesh brought about by dogs, evildoers, That is not mincing words! He then turns to the Gospel and proclaims that we do not stake our salvation on following the law and all it's demands, but we look to Christ and His completed works done on our behalf. Our righteousness is NOT based on our works, but on our salvation in Christ.

He goes on to speak of the day of his own circumcision on the 8<sup>th</sup> day as required by the law, and how he became known as a Hebrew of Hebrews a pharisee of pharisees, and, to steal a title from a well known movie, he was like the Top Gun. He was zealous as a persecutor of the church, his righteousness based on the law, again, faultless. But then he had an event which brought about a new confession from him, which we read starting at verse 7

***7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,***

Paul had a change in his life. It all began on the road to Damascus where he was “captured” you might say. As he puts it in Galatians:

***15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I***

***might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:***

He had an awakening you might say, as it pleased God at that very time to reveal the Son in Him. By Gods grace he was soon convinced that all he had gained in his former life was now a loss and what he had gained in Christ was all that mattered to Him from then on. By Gods grace he was now convinced of what we read in verse 9:

***found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.***

Paul completely disavowed the righteousness he had held so dear, the self righteousness that he had gained from the law. Now he celebrates the imputed righteousness of Christ, the Righteousness from God which is a gift from above, free from the law. His ministry then changed to preaching that faith alone saves, and fellowship with Christ is all that truly matters.

Turn in your bibles to Romans 3 ...as we continue to look at more scripture that pertains to this “Imputed Righteousness”.

As we are turning there you might ask, just what is imputed righteousness? It's when we are completely devoid of something and have no way of earning it, no way of buying it, no way of stealing it, the very state we are in when it comes to righteousness. We have no inherent righteousness of our own, it comes from God clothing us, by imputing or another way to say it, transferring or crediting us with the righteousness of Christ.

In the sermon on the mount Jesus says to all those listening, that in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven, their righteousness must *exceed* that of the Pharisees, who were the experts in and had all knowledge of, the law. Even the Pharisees, as expert in the Law as they were, could not obtain the righteousness needed to enter into the Kingdom. It only comes from Gods imputing, or crediting one with His righteousness. In Romans 3, verse 21-26 we read this:

***But now apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and all are***

*justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ to be a propitiation through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

Paul tells us what the real purpose of the law and the Prophets was. They were intended to testify of Christ, and, according to Paul in Galatians 3, as a schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ and testify of His Righteousness. So not only do we see a continuation of this righteousness being credited to all His elect in verse 22, we also see some other key words come into play. We are told in verse 24, for example, that we are **justified** freely, that we have **redemption** in Christ, and we see in verse 25 Christ as our **propitiation** through the shedding of His blood. That is He, by the shedding of His blood, is our **atoning sacrifice**.

These all our equally important in the whole plan of salvation. They must all be there, or we literally have none of it. For example, without propitiation we have no redemption. Without redemption we have no justification and without justification we have no righteousness and so on. We also see in this passage that His imputed righteousness reaches through all of time, no generation is left out. And just as a side note, speaking of justification, can you imagine being made to stand before a judge guilty of a series of crimes and have as your advocate your brother? And then have that brother say to the Judge “Father, this saint is spotless, he has no sin.” And then you realize that your brother, the advocate, just called your judge father so that means the judge is your father! Yes brothers and sisters, that is how it works. Christ is our advocate, God is the judge and we call Him “Abba, Father.” Our imputed righteousness comes to us from God the Father who has loved us, His children, from before the foundation of the world. Our salvation was planned and set in stone from the time he wrote our names down in the Lambs Book of life kept in heaven from eternity.

*I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”* This is our advocate in Heaven speaking for us. Oh wondrous grace!

Waypoints 2 and 3 I am presenting together because they are so closely linked by Christ's obedience to the Father and how it all ties into Christ's atonement, or propitiation, for our sins. Both are the result of His complete adherence to the Law and all its requirements. The key lesson here is that the righteousness imputed to those who believe is Christ's *earned* righteousness. What is meant by earned righteousness? It's the righteousness He acquired by His perfect obedience to the Father while He dwelt among us men, tempted in every way but avoided sin. He has been eternally righteous, but while here on earth

***“He had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:17*** That verse shows us how much the atonement is tied into that perfect obedience, therefore the perfect sacrifice, for the atonement of our sins.

Christ's obedience is well documented throughout the New Testament. Let's turn to John Chapter 8:28-30. We will take a quick look at these verses and a few others to see how the obedience of the Son to the Father was so important to the “never in doubt” success of the plan of salvation drawn up in the council halls of eternity. The Son needed to be like those he was dwelling with on the earth, but, ***without*** sin, because, if He had gone against the Father's will even once, He would just be another Son of Adam. God's requirement was the sacrifice must be sinless, with out spot or blemish. The sacrifice must be Holy in every way. With just one trespass of the law, Jesus would no longer have fit that requirement. The trespass of one law makes you guilty of them all. Therefore, He could not then be a sacrifice for the sins of the people. We would still be guilty of all our sin since no propitiation would have been possible. But Christ's obedience prevailed and He said this in John 8.

***John 8:28-30 So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”***

Christ, answering those who refused to believe Him, referred to His upcoming crucifixion saying that afterward they will know that He is who He says He is. The one and only Son of God. He says He does nothing on his own volition or

whim, but does as the Father has taught Him and for that the Father has not left Him, unlike the rest of natural mankind who because of the fall are separated from God. Christ, being the humble servant to the Father, always pleased the Him.

Let's return back to Philippians but this time to chapter 2 beginning at verse 5. What we will be looking at is a reaffirming of Jesus' statement back in John about doing nothing by His own authority but only doing what pleased the Father...in other words, perfect obedience. Philippians 2:5-11

***5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to for his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

It is clear that Christ was an obedient, humble servant even though being God Himself He did not consider equality something to pursue but instead took on the role of an obedient, humble servant. Being in appearance as man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death----even death on a cross. He was rewarded for that, but we will look at that later. It is important to note though, that He was made in human likeness and appeared in every way to be a man...but why? What was the purpose? Let's look at a couple verses to see the answer. Returning for just a second to Hebrews 2 which has verse 17 that we referenced earlier, we will now be seeing it with more context which will make it's importance even clearer..

***Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully***

***human in every way, to make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.***

So, this is the reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, to make atonement for the sins of the people. The writer of Hebrews adds to this thought a little further in chapter 4 verse 15, where he includes four very important words to what we have just read: ***For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet was without sin.*** This verse and those four words, **yet was without sin**, are going to be important to remember as we continue on to the conclusion of the study.

Looking at these last few readings, we do see the perfect obedience of the Son, even unto death, and in that death and resurrection He was victorious over sin, death, and the devil himself, bringing freedom to all his elect,... Abraham's true descendants, .....the children of the promise. He was fully human in every way, made to suffer temptations in every way, but again those 4 words, ***yet was without sin.*** He was the obedient Son, made perfect through His trials, sent from Heaven with an assignment, to redeem the elect of God by dying for their sins. And, He was found worthy for that assignment.

Several references to Christ's atonement, or propitiation were also presented by those readings. As mentioned, He was sent from Heaven with an assignment, to redeem the elect of God by dying for their sins. We read in verse 17 ***“in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, to make atonement (propitiation) for the sins of the people***

A merciful and faithful high priest IN SERVICE TO GOD to make atonement for the sins of His people. Again, very much a servant to God. A quick reading from 1st John chapter 4 verses 9, 10 and then verse 14 helps us focus on God's specific purpose for the sending His Son:

***9. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 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.*** And then verse 14, ***And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.***

God sent His Son for a very definite purpose, that was designed and carried out in the Council Halls of eternity in Heaven itself, then manifested on earth when He sent His Son so that number 1. we might live through Him, 2. to be the propitiation for our sins and number 3. He sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. He was sent to redeem His people from their sins,

Just a couple more verses dealing with this propitiation for our sins, we swill be turning to Isaiah 53:10-12 if you would like to turn there. This of course is one of the most well known, most preached on chapters in the bible. It is an Old Testament telling of the old, old story of Christs suffering by way of the crucifixion and being a propitiation for our sins. These last 3 verses of the chapter deal with the crucifixion and the suffering of Christ while he was suffering for our sake. They also speak to the rewards mentioned earlier when reading from Philippians 2 verse 11 which I said we would address later in the study. So, picking up here in Isaiah 53 verse 10:

***Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.***

This brings to mind a hymn that I became acquainted with just recently that I will be referring to again later as we come to the conclusion of this mornings study, but this particular verse fits perfectly here with the verses we just read, which, from what I can see is why the song this was written. It goes like this:

**His robes for mine: God's justice is appeased.  
Jesus is crushed, and thus the Father's pleased.**



**Christ drank God's wrath on sin, then cried,  
"Tis done!" Sin's wage is paid; propitiation won.**

We see the suffering of our Lord and Savior as He, by the Lord's purpose, was crushed, beaten and pierced. But we see also the rewards for His perfect obedience as Paul mentions in Philippians 2. As a reminder it says: *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11](#) and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* There is also a verse in Hebrews that I am always reminded of when I read Isaiah 53, especially verse 11, which is Hebrews 12:2 where it says this: *looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Back here in Isaiah we read that He shall see the travail of His soul "AND BE SATISFIED" and goes on to say that He will receive a portion among the great and He will divide the spoils with the strong. To the victor goes the spoils, and as Hebrews 12:2 and Philippians 2 together say, Christ has been exalted and has been given rule over all creation, under Heaven and Earth:

And then lastly, one last verse on Christ's rewards, Isaiah says in chapter 52:13 very succinctly, with few words *Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.*"

So many reasons to praise our Savior who is so deserving of his rewards. For the joy set before Him He was lifted up and is now exalted and sitting at the right hand of the Father on His throne.

Now on to the last of the waypoints taking us to the central point of this morning's study, this event that I have identified as the Great Exchange, one of the greatest gifts ever presented to man. First, a quick reading of a verse in Isaiah 61 verse 10. Just one verse so I will just read it here from my notes:

*I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as*

*a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

I also like the verse from the Song Of Solomon that I used in my last study.  
**You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no spot in you.**

We are now looking to the robe of righteousness that was freely and willingly given to us by Christ. We are, with out that robe, just as worms in God's eyes. And our self righteousness is exactly what Paul describes back in Philippians 3 as he revealed the failures of his previous “self” righteousness. But we, by the Grace of God, now have a different righteousness to rest upon.

Paul makes it plain, he knew that his prior righteousness is not of his own works or position, but by Gods grace and His imputing of the righteousness of Christ unto him. Up to this point, we have only looked at half the story. By only looking at the imputing of righteousness to the elect sinner and looking at only that, we are missing a major part of the story. We are talking about a Great Exchange, and an exchange means someone is getting something in return for giving something. Paul knows that, let's take a look at our final reading found in II Corinthians Chapter 5:21.

Some say that this verse may be the most concise presentation of the gospel in all of Scripture. By this one man, there was propitiation for sin, there was a substitute to take on our deserved wrath for us, there was the crucifixion, death, burial resurrection and the resultant life in the righteousness of the Risen Christ given to all the redeemed. And it all came from this that we will read in chapter 5 verse 21 of II Corinthians

***God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we could become the righteousness of God .***

So many things to say about this verse because several interpretations are prevalent in today's teachings, but I don't have time to go into them all. Just suffice it to say, Christ did not become the worlds greatest sinner because of what this verse says, and He did **not** become sin as some interpret this verse, He was counted guilty because of OUR sin that was imputed to Him. But remember those

4 words from Hebrews we referenced.... **Yet Was Without Sin. HE HAD NO SIN IN HIM!** Christ was God Himself, and God has no sin in Him, AND is incapable of sin. As it has been mentioned earlier, Christ had to be one who knew no sin or God could not, **and as a just God would not**, have found His sacrifice acceptable. If that were so, oh, we would, if possible, be living in a much different world than what we live in now. It's unfortunate there are disputes over something so special, so important. Just remember when studying the bible, Bible study 101, keep things in context with **ALL** Gods word, do not try to make all of Gods word fit the context of one or two verses.

So now this verse is bringing us to what we call the “Great Exchange”. It's what I've been working to introduce in this study, using all those previous points to bring us here. So, what is this great exchange we are talking about? The Great Exchange began when Jesus took upon Himself the full weight of our sin and carried them on His person to the cross. Then through His sacrificial death, Christ bore the punishment we deserved, as He became our substitute, taking on the pain and suffering of the cross. When on the cross, He cried out “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” He was already in the throes of the eternal pain and suffering what was ours to bear. We were the guilty ones, we were the haters of God, we the sinners from birth. But God, in His indelible grace, sent His only begotten Son so that we, His elect children from eternity, would not have to suffer the punishment that our substitute went through on our behalf. He, who was always Obedient unto God, even unto death on the cross.

Christ accomplished that assignment from the Father by satisfying the righteous demands of a Holy God and proving He was the true Lamb of God when He arose on the third day. By that sacrificial death of the Lamb, Christ willingly took upon Himself our filthy, sinful, evil, guilt laden robes of sin, and then, **in exchange**, we were given The spotless, washed pure white Holy Robe of His Righteousness. And at the same time, as part that exchange, Christ took on our sin, guilt and punishment by eternal death, giving us a life of free from all sin, death and punishment for ever more. ***God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we could become the righteousness of God***. I can't for the life of me wrap my mind around such a one sided exchange such as that, but it was the Triune God's plan in eternity, and now, it is ours to rejoice, worship and sing the praises of the One that made that Great Exchange for us.

## Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to go back to the hymn that I started to share with you earlier. I was introduced to the hymn when listening to a sermon by Brother David Morris who will be the speaker at our upcoming conference in about a month from today. He read the 3rd of the four verses contained in the song, I will be reading the first and last of the verses divided by the chorus. The theme of the hymn is about **The Great Exchange**. The title of the hymn is “His Robes For Mine”.

**His robes for mine: O wonderful exchange!  
Clothed in my sin, Christ suffered ‘neath God’s rage.  
Draped in His righteousness, I’m justified.  
In Christ I live, for in my place He died.**

***I cling to Christ, and marvel at the cost:  
Jesus forsaken, God estranged from God.  
Bought by such love, my life is not my own.  
My praise—my all—shall be for Christ alone.***

**His robes for mine: such anguish none can know.  
Christ, God’s beloved, condemned as though His foe.  
He, as though I, accursed and left alone;  
I, as though He, embraced and welcomed home!**

**What a Glorious Exchange.**

I take notice of the first line of the chorus because it says something I think is important to keep in mind....“I cling to Christ”. Brothers and Sisters, that should be the true focus of our spiritual walk in Him. Thankful to Him always for His Great Exchange. Cling to Him and only Him. We don't cling to a cross or flee to Calvary, we cling to the Christ of the cross, flee to the Christ of Calvary. The last line of the chorus should be our constant desire “***My praise—my all—shall be for Christ alone***”. He's all there is.....He is all we have..... the good news of the Gospel? He's all we need!