

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW THE GOSPEL?

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20-21 • TV-025A

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2 Corinthians 5:20-21

“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. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

I want you to open your Bibles to the book of **2 Corinthians 5:20-21**.

Now, I’d like to begin this message with a question, a question to you personally; do you really want to know the Gospel? Do you really want to know the secret of eternal life? Do you really want to know the hidden mysteries of redemption?

Would you really like to know, *“How God can be just and justify the ungodly?”* Are you willing to surrender your tradition? Are you willing to lay down your religious custom at the feet of Christ? Are you willing to lay aside your wisdom and your thoughts?

You know, the Scripture says; *“There’s a way that seemeth right unto man; the end is death (destruction).”* And God said; *“Your thoughts are not my thoughts and my thoughts are not your thoughts.”*

Are you willing to lay your so-called wisdom and your tradition and your customs and your thoughts at the feet of Christ and learn from His Word and listen to His Word? Do you really want to know the Gospel?

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Well, if you do; look at our text today, **2 Corinthians 5:20**. Paul begins this way; I'm going to be perfectly frank with you and perfectly honest because I want to be frank with myself. I want to be honest with my own soul. Paul begins **verse 20** with these words; *"We are ambassadors (or representatives of) for Christ."*

Now the true minister of Christ claims no special powers either in his head or in his hand. Paul said, *"Who is sufficient for these things?"* He talks about the Gospel. He talks about redemption. He talks about conviction, and conversion and eternal life. He talks about preaching Christ and Him crucified.

And then he said, *"Who is sufficient for these things?"* Certainly we're not. *"Our sufficiency is Christ."* We have no special powers. We are representatives of Him who has all authority and all power. The true minister of Jesus Christ claims no special privileges. He claims no special place.

He knows this, he knows that he must keep his body and bring it into subjection lest while preaching to others he becomes a castaway. Paul cried; *"O that I may win Christ and be found in Him. O that I may know Him and the power of His resurrected life."*

We have no special powers or special privileges or special position. Actually, Paul said; *"I'm not worthy to be called an apostle. I'm less than the least of all the saints."* We don't preach ourselves; *"we preach Christ and Him crucified."*

We're not trying to get you to follow us. We're trying to get you to follow Christ. We are ambassadors for Christ. *"We pray you in Christ's stead; be ye reconciled to God."*

And we claim no special holiness. Paul said; *"Christ came from heaven to this earth to save sinners of whom I am the chief."*

So, my friends; the only claim we make is this, (no special powers, position, places, privileges, or holiness) we simply make this claim; we are representatives of Jesus Christ. We come to you believing His Word. We come to you preaching His Word.

And we beg of you; *"Be ye reconciled to God."* Cease from following men, cease from following unscriptural tradition. Cease from putting your hope in religious experiences and religious ceremonialism and *"let God be true and every man a liar."*

Find out what the Word of God says; find out from His Word who you are, who God is, who Jesus Christ is, how Christ saves sinners, *"How God can be just and justify the ungodly."* Look at the Word of God. *"Now we are ambassadors for Christ as though He did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead; be ye reconciled to God."*

Look at **verse 21**; it begins with, *"For"* F-o-r. Now here is the Gospel of salvation. Here is the message of redemption. Without eloquence, without fine words, without man's tampering traditions; here is the Gospel.

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Now, if you want to know the Gospel, here it is. Paul said, “I am a representative of Christ. I am an ambassador of the Son of God. I am trying to get you not to follow me; I’m trying to get you to be reconciled to God, here it is, *“For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”* That’s the Gospel.

Now, we have introduced to us three persons here. There are three persons mentioned in this message here, in this text, He, Him, and us. I want you to look at it. Will you look at it with me, **verse 21**?

“He, (that is God the Father) hath made Him, (Christ the Son), to be sin for us,” that is you and that is me.

Now, let’s look at these three persons that are introduced here. And as we look at them and look at their work and look at the need then we can learn the Gospel at least in our heads. God the Holy Ghost must reveal it to our hearts.

We can at least hear it with these ears and see it with these eyes and understand it with these minds because here it is if words can mean anything. Now, we have three persons mentioned here!

First of all: There is God the Father!

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He prayed in Gethsemane’s Garden made this statement in **John 17 verse 3**, *“And this is eternal life that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”*

Here is the true God. Here is the Father. Here is the creator of heaven and earth. And I’m afraid; I’m afraid that the God of the Bible, the God of creation, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, the God of Scripture, the God of heaven and earth; I am afraid that the God that is being worshipped today and preached from the average pulpit is not the God of this Bible.

I’m afraid that men have made them a god from their own imagination. In **Psalms 50** David quotes the Father saying this; *“You thought I was altogether such a one as yourself.”*

I’m afraid God is a very different being from what some men suppose. Are you willing to go to the Word of God and see what God says about Himself? Eternal life is to know God, *“He hath made Him to be sin.”* Who made Him to be sin, the God of the Bible?

Well, let’s see what God says about himself. First of all, He is a sovereign God. I know that, almighty, with all authority, subject to no will but His own. *“He doeth all things according to the counsel of His own will.”* I know that; the Scripture tells me that.

In **Psalms 115 and in Psalms 135** David says this: *“Wherefore should the heathen say, where is your God?”* Where is your God? Some peoples’ gods are down at the church where they leave

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him every Sunday. Some peoples' gods are on a shrine where they kneel and worship. Some men's gods are the sun, the moon, the stars, nature, and other things. Where's your God?

David said; *"Our God is in the heavens and He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did He in heaven, earth, in the seas, and in all deep places."*

David said, "That's my God." He's a sovereign God. *"He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth and giveth it to whomsoever He will."* He's an almighty God. That's the first thing we find out about God from the Scriptures; it is that He is sovereign and almighty.

In **Isaiah 46:9**; listen to Isaiah, God said; *"I am God; there is none else. I'm God; there is none like me. I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand; I will do all my pleasure."*

What am I preaching? Here's what I'm preaching, that the only place where a man will really worship is at the footstool, at the throne of a sovereign God, *"Who doeth all things according to the counsel of His own will."*

Now men will bargain with an equal. They'll argue with an equal. They'll debate with an equal. They'll use an equal. They'll worship a sovereign and that's the only place a man will worship.

And I'll tell you something else; the only place where a man can find sure mercy, true mercy, saving mercy, is at the throne of a sovereign God who is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him, who is able to lift the beggar from the dunghill, who is able to raise the beggar to the throne and make him a prince and a king. That's the only place you can find true mercy.

And I'll tell you something else, there's only one place that a man can find real comfort when the clouds are heavy overhead and when the floods are rising from beneath and when the wind is blowing from without and there are disturbances from within; and like Job when you can't find the answers on this earth; you can find them at the throne of a sovereign God who said; *"All things work together for good to them who love Him, who are the called according to His purpose."*

That's where you'll find comfort when you're able to put your baby in the ground and say; "God is sovereign, when you're able to sacrifice even your home, or your job or whatever you have to sacrifice and say, "God is sovereign, when you lose your eyesight or your hearing, when you lose your health and you're able to say, "God is sovereign."

When the trials of life become so heavy and you cannot find the answer except to say, *"God doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth, even so Father; it seems good in thy sight."*

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Do you know God? Is that your God? The God of the Bible is sovereign. He never makes a mistake. He's too wise to make a mistake. He's too good to do wrong. And He works everything out for His ultimate, eternal, glory.

Secondly: God is a righteous God! The God of the Bible is. Now I'm saying that men today are worshipping a god who is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is sovereign and He's just and He's righteous. The God of the Bible will not wink at sin. The God of the Bible will not overlook sin.

The God of the Bible is not one whose holiness can be compromised. The God of the Bible will and must punish all sin. *"The soul that sinneth it shall surely die."* That's what the Scripture says. *"The soul that sinneth shall surely die. Sin, when it's finished bringeth forth death."* That's what the Scripture says.

God declares, *"I will in no wise, (by no means) clear the guilty."* That's so! God is just. He's not going to wink at sin, overlook sin, bypass sin, and excuse sin. Sin is going to be paid for; it's going to be punished, all sin. Every transaction shall receive a just recompense of reward.

Now God has in His sovereignty determined to save. *"He hath made Him to be sin for us."* And God in His righteousness made Christ to be sin for us because God in His righteousness must punish sin.

He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. The God of the Bible will not, cannot, blot out sin without a suitable substitute and a suitable sacrifice and a suitable sin-offering. He's just, He's righteous, and He's holy and He must remain holy.

And either you'll pay for your sins or Christ is going to pay for them, but somebody is. God is not going to just rub them out, blot them out, or put them away, without them being paid for. He's just. *"Shall not the judge of the earth do right?"*

Thirdly: The God of the Bible; He's not only a sovereign God, He's not only a righteous God, but thank God He's a merciful God, *"God is love."*

I know that God is almighty and so do you, the very name God, capital G-0-D means all authority, almighty, sovereign, ruler of the universe. I know that God is holy. Isaiah said, *"When king Uzziah died I saw the Lord high and lifted up. His train filled the temple. The cherubims and seraphims cried, Holy, Holy, Holy."* I know God is holy. If He's not holy He's not God.

But I'm glad of this; I'm glad He's merciful. The Scripture says, *"He's plenteous in mercy."* The Scripture says, *"He delights to show mercy."* The Scripture says, *"God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."*

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“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Aren’t you glad God is love? Aren’t you glad there’s mercy for sinners? Aren’t you glad there’s grace for the guilty?

As the Judge He must punish sin, but as the Father He will pardon sin. *“Of Him are you in Christ Jesus who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”*

I’m glad there’s redemption with the Lord. *“There’s mercy with the Lord.”*

**“Come ye sinners, poor and needy
Weak and wounded, sick and sore
Jesus ready stands to save you
Full of pity, love, and power.**

**Let not conscience make you linger
Nor a fitness fondly dream
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.”**

“He’s plenteous in mercy. Be ye reconciled to God,” not just any god, the God of the Bible, the God of the universe, the God of holy Scriptures, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Find out who He is.

Be able to come with the leper and cry; *“Lord; if you will, you can make me clean.”* Be able to come with blind Bartimaeus who would not be silenced but continued to cry; *“Jesus thy Son of David, (thy King of kings) have mercy on me.”*

Be able to come with that Publican in the temple who because of his shame and sin would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven but smote on his breast and cried, *“God be merciful to me the sinner.”*

Come like the thief on the cross who said; *“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”* That is God. Eternal life is to know God, the true God.

Look at the second person introduced to us here. Here is Christ the Son; He who is sovereign, just, holy, merciful, *“Hath made Him.”* Who is this Jesus Christ? Who is this Saviour of sinners? Who is this Redeemer we preach, Jesus of Nazareth, born in a manger, walked the streets of Jerusalem, the shores of the Galilee, and the hillsides of Judea?

Who is this man? First; *“He’s the only begotten of the Father.”* Notice the Scripture says, *“Begotten,”* not made. He is co-eternal. He is co-existent with the Father.

In **John 1:1-12** it says this; *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And all things were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh.”*

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Who was made flesh, the one who created the world, the one who was with the Father, equal with the Father? *“He was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”* That’s who He is!

Phillip said; *“Show us the Father and we’ll be satisfied.”* Christ said; *“Phillip; have I been with you so long and you don’t even know me? He that hath seen me; (get this) hath seen the Father.”*

“I and my Father are one.” I can’t explain the Trinity, you can’t, and nobody else can. Just don’t argue about it. Just accept it by faith. I can’t explain how God got a ball of clay and made a man out of it and *“breathed into it the breath of life and it became a living soul.”*

I can’t explain how God hurled the sun into space and made all these planets that orbit the world. I can’t explain it and you can’t either. I can’t explain how a tiny seed becomes a full-grown man in a certain length of time. I can’t explain it; you can’t either. I believe it.

God the Father sent Christ the Son into this world and He was a man. Pilate said, *“Behold the man.”* There He is, the man, not a man, the man. *“In the fullness of the time God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law.”* He who was the ancient of days became the infant of days, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

“The first Adam was of the earth, (made out of the sand). The second Adam is the Lord from heaven. And as we have borne the image of the earthy we shall bear the image of the heavenly. In Adam we died; in Christ we’re made alive.”

Christ came down here to this earth as a man, God in the flesh, and became my representative. His nature was free from sin. Read **Genesis 3:15**: *“The seed of woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.”*

Who is the serpent, Satan? Who’s the seed of woman? It’s not you; you’re the seed of man. It’s not any of these fly-by-night messiahs who come from Korea, Japan, England, Jerusalem, and other places; it’s the Lord who came from heaven. He’s the Messiah. *“He’s the seed of woman.”* He’s the virgin-born Son of God.

His life was without sin. His lips never spoke an idle word. His heart never harbored an evil thought. His eyes never looked with pride. His hands would never lift in anger. His feet never walked in sin, perfect. *“This is my beloved Son (the Father said) in whom I’m well pleased, tested, tried, tempted, in all points of the law, every jot and every tittle, and yet without sin.”*

He said, *“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”* Sin hath no place in it. He knew no sin. He’s a man. But not only is He the God-man; He’s the sin-offering. He’s the perfect lamb. He’s the perfect sacrifice without spot or blemish.

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He was slain in our stead. *“He was numbered with the transgressors. He bear the sin of many. He bore our sins in His body on the tree.”* There at Calvary He died for you, the sinner, and He died for me as our representative.

As in Adam we died. By the disobedience of one we were made sinners. In Christ we have life given because He paid the price. He redeemed our souls. He satisfied the law and He satisfied the justice of almighty God. He hath made Him; God the Father hath made Christ the Son to be sin for us who knew no sin.

All right; here’s the third person; *“That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Here’s the Father, “He.” Here’s the Son, *“hath made Him.”* Here’s the sinner, *“to be sin for us.* He hath made Him to be sin for us that God might be just and justify the ungodly, that we in Him might have a righteousness which we by nature don’t have.

He wore my crown of thorns that I might wear His crown of glory. He took my nakedness, my ragged garments of fig leaves that I might wear His spotless robe of holiness. He bore my shame, my guilt, my treachery, my vile nature, that I might share His beauty, His holiness, and His glory.

He endured my hell that I might have His heaven. He died my death, the death I deserve, that I might have His life. He went into the grave and there He lay. But on the third day He came forth triumphant, victorious, the conqueror, that I might live and He said; *“Because I live you shall live.”*

And my friend; when John wrote that blessed **fifth chapter of 1 John** he said; *“This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.”*

It’s not in the church, it’s not in the altar, it’s not in the law, it’s not in the ordinances, it’s not in your decision, it’s not in your good works, it’s not in your feeling, it’s not in your experience, and it’s not in your ragged robes of self-righteousness.

Eternal life is in the Son because God in His sovereignty and God in His justice and God in His mercy made Him to be sin. *“He was numbered with the transgressors.”*

**“He paid the debt
All the debt I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow.”**

God made Him to be sin for you and me as our representative that we might be made the righteousness, the purity, the holiness of God in Him.

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Here's the sinner. Do you know who he is? Can you see the sinner standing before the bar of God's judgment, standing before the bar of God's law covered with His shame and guilt with no plea, without one plea? Can you see him?

The Father steps forth and says, "I give my Son to take your place. I give my Son to bear your shame. I give my Son to bear your sin. I give my Son to suffer in your stead." Will you believe that, will you believe that?

**"Just as I am without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me
And that thou bidst me come to thee
Oh Lamb of God I come**

**Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot
But that thy blood can cleanse each spot
Oh Lamb of God I come**

**Just as I am poor, wretched, blind
Sight, riches, healing of the mind
All I need I in thee to find
Oh Lamb of God I come."**

That's the Gospel. It's a person, it's a person! The Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified for His people. Substitution and satisfaction!