

The Cross of Christ: Bricks & Mortar – Week 6

HOOK

Illustration: In 1751, the colony of Massachusetts made a treaty with the Mohawk Native Americans. It was a big deal. There were governors, members of the Massachusetts assembly, Mohawk chiefs and their people, along with a group of ministers. Selected from the ministers to give a sermon was Jonathon Edwards.

He gestured to the many English and Dutch in attendance and said, “These honorable gentlemen come in the name of King George, but I come in the name of Jesus Christ.” He then gave a sermon on the gospel beginning with the fall of man through Jesus’ work on the cross.

Progressive pastors are teaching that the gospel has morphed and changed to fit its time period and environment, but 270 years ago at the Massachusetts Treaty the message was still the same.

The Christian Creeds are summaries of scripture. They are short, easy to memorize, suffer little-to-no change over time, and are often highly scrutinized by the overall church before put into circulation. The earliest Christian creed was already circulating by 2-7 years after Jesus resurrected.

1 Corinthians 15:3-5 - *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*

- **Why did Jesus die? What happened on the third day after His death? What did it fulfill? Were there witnesses to this fantastic event?**
- If you listened to a biblical preacher give a gospel sermon 270 years ago, 2,000 years ago, or yesterday it’d be the same. The message hasn’t changed. **Jesus died for our sins.**

BOOK – Thesis: Jesus died for me.

1 John 4:9-10 - *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

LOOK

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS (and imputed sin)

Define imputed: to attribute or ascribe

- **Example: Pawn Stars** - coin/medal by Captain Cook - \$50 vs. \$8,500 (expert).
 - They imputed value to it. Not invented its value, but objectively judged.
- **Example: Father to son** – lordship over an estate passed to son.
- **Example: Child steals from store.** The parent held responsible for crime.
 - Imputed can also be understood as being transferred. Guilt here, placed on the child, is being transferred from the criminal to the parent.
 - This is what Jesus does for us.

2 Corinthians 5:20 - *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

- **How are we reconciled to God?**

We are rebels against God, His enemies. We're born into the rebel forces and we pledge our allegiance to it every time we sin. We have chosen the lord of our lives and it's us. We are the masters of our lives. That God would demand our obedience is offensive, and He must be fought (and killed ie. Jesus).

Illustration: Student wears burgundy shirt with black and dark gray stains. The rebel's head has a golden crown on top of crown of thorns. Their hands are covered in black paint and they have a flag and are waiving it looking spiteful towards Jesus-actor in huge white shirt.

- In this illustration, I picked burgundy/black as the rebel colors of all those against God. The golden crown represents who they obey and worship, self. As enemies of God they are under His wrath - the crown of thorns - and His penalty (punishment) for our rebellion is death and the second death which is hell (initially created for satan and his angels).
- **Matthew 16:17** – God does a work in the rebel's heart that only He can do and they lay down their rebellion (regeneration).

Illustration: Jesus-actor places hand on the rebel's shoulder and the rebel lays down their flag, puts their crown on his head, and kneels to the Jesus-actor.

- To be WITH holy God, we have to be holy/perfect/other from sin, the world, the devil and their rebellion. Our shirt has to be completely, purely white.

Illustration: “Wipe away the black smudges and burgundy color.” They use their black hands to try to wipe away the color. “It’ impossible.” I place a dot of white paint in their hands. They squish it in their black hands and it becomes dark gray before smudging it on their shirt. They spread out their hands as if to be on a cross.

- To be with GOD, they must be holy AS He is holy. He is violently separated from all else.

2 Corinthians 5:20b-21 - *We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (imputed sin/righteousness)*

Illustration: Jesus-actor wipes away paint on the rebel’s hands and takes the rebel’s shirt. He takes off his big white shirt, holding it in his hand, puts on the burgundy.

- God justly, correctly ascribed to us the condition of rebellion, worthlessness, enemy, and deserving of His wrath and punishment of death.
- **Our sin, guilt was “imputed”, transferred to Jesus.** On the cross, God counted Jesus as the sinner and treated Him as the rebel, worthless, enemy and poured out on Him the wrath and punishment we earned and deserved.

Illustration: Jesus-actor puts the big, white shirt on the rebel.

- **2 Corinthians 5:21** - *...in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*
- **Adam and Eve** – God, Himself, clothed Adam and Eve’s nakedness.
- **Jesus’ standing before God as the perfect and righteous, holy, and (don’t miss this) BELOVED Son is imputed to us.**

Application: **Phil.2:3-5** - *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...*

- Yes, this means what it says. Treat other people as MORE significant. To serve/love other this way is to follow the leadership of Jesus. He went to the cross for you. You can let someone have the better seat or take the dirtier job.
 - **How can you be sacrificial this week?**

But the penalty, the punishment, for sin must be dealt with. God's justice must be satisfied. **Romans 6:23** – *the wages of sin is death*. The penalty for rebellion is God's wrath poured out on them.

- **Their sin/rebellion deserves death.** Jesus, who IS God, out of His great love, does the unthinkable.
- **Who is worthy enough before perfect, holy God to die for another's rebellion?**
- In battle a soldier may die for another to extend their life. **But who is worthy to pay the price for treason against an infinitely good God? Who's blood is perfect and acceptable to GOD?**
- Only God, Himself, is worthy of His own standards. And, in Jesus, God carries our sin to death and endures on Himself the wrathful penalty we deserved.

PENALTY SUBSTITUTION

Romans 3:23-26 - *...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*

- God gave types and shadows of how He'd save His people from their sins.
 - **Isaac and Abraham** – Akedah – God was the provider of the substitute.
 - **The Passover** – Paschal Lamb – Blood covered God's people.
 - **Mt. Sinai – the Sacrificial Law** – Blood sacrifice is the substitute for the sin of God's people.

Romans 3:23-26 - *...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

- **Propitiation** – gaining favor, making satisfaction, appeasement
- We who were slaves to sin are “redeemed.”
- “Passed over” = Exodus reference. God passes over the redeemed rebel and poured out His wrath on Jesus.
- God maintains His perfection and justice AND justifies those He loves.

Illustration: The former rebel puts their hands up as if on a cross, and Jesus-actor trades places with where the rebel stands, takes their crown of thorns and places it on his OWN head, and spreads out his arms as if to be on the cross.

- Jesus died in our place.

The message of the cross is divisive:

Michael Gungor in **2017** – “That God needed to be appeased with blood, is not beautiful. It’s horrific.” **vs.**

John Wesley in **1739** – “He breaks the power of reigning sin. He sets the prisoner free. His blood can make the foulest clean. His blood availed for me.”

- What progressive Christianity is trying to remove from the cross because it’s uncomfortable IS our HOPE. It’s His expression of love, profound to the hearts and sweet to the ears of those who are saved by His unfathomable grace.
- **Romans 5:8** - *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
 - But God’s abundant grace doesn’t even stop there. **You are so loved!**

Application: **Galatians 3:5** - *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

- All of these are trying to take back the crown of obedience and place it back on our flesh, our selves.
- **What in your life needs to be put to death?** You can’t do it. Surrender it to your King.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...*

Illustration of 9 Gifts from God for His People

1. Baby – new life, born again

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** – *...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

2. Soap – sin washed away

- **Isaiah 1:18** - *Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*

3. Bell – righteousness

- **Romans. 5:1** – *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4. Frayed Rope - freedom

- If a man on trial was found innocent and set free, the city bells would ring and the town crier would exclaim, “He is free. He is free!”
- **John 8:34-36** - *Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

5. Ring – adoption by the Father into His family = the body of Christ

- **Romans 8:14-15** – *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”*

6. Anchor – security, eternal hope

- **John 10:28-29** – *And I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father...is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.*
 - Our salvation is based on Jesus’ work and faithfulness, not ours.
- **Hebrews 6:18-20** – Confidence in our salvation is an “anchor.”

7. Key – heavenly inheritance

- **Matthew 25:34** – *Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*
- **Romans 8:16-17** – *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

8. Chisel – sanctification

- Sanctification is the process of becoming more like Jesus, by having our hearts and minds purified throughout our lives through the work of Holy Spirit.
- **1 Thess. 5:23-24** - *may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*
 - **Illustration:** The white shirt was baggy on the former rebel. They will spend a lifetime growing into it.

9. Battery – the Holy Spirit (God gives Himself. He empowers, purifies, comforts)

- **John 14:16-17** - *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,*

because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

- None of these are for our benefit. They are for us to give glory to God and to further His kingdom on earth.

10. Shoes – purpose, great commission

- **Matthew 28:18-20** - *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

FURTHER INQUIRY

Read **Eph. 1:3-14**. How many of the 10 gifts can you find? Are there any more which I didn't list?

TOOK

Dick and Rick Hoyt and the Iron Man triathlon:

“In 1977, Rick Hoyt, who suffers from cerebral palsy, asked his father Dick if he could help him finish a five-mile running race. Then 36, Dick, though he wasn't a runner, made his son's dream come true and set the stage for a lifetime of competing as a team. After their first race Rick said, “Dad, when I'm running, it feels like I'm not handicapped.”

The pair, from Holland, Mass. set their sights on the **IRONMAN World Championship, and in 1989**, made their first attempt at the legendary race. Dick pulled Rick in a special boat through the swim, rode with him on a seat on the front of his bicycle, and pushed him in a special wheelchair to the finish line in 1989. A decade later they were back to once again inspire the world with a finish at the IRONMAN World Championship. **Through March 2016**, the Hoyts had competed in **1,130 endurance events**, including **72 marathons**, **6 IRONMAN triathlons**, and **32 instances of the Boston Marathon**. They were inducted into the IRONMAN Hall of Fame in 2008.” – Jennifer Ward on ironman.com

Rick has no personal. He can't run, bicycle, swim, or even bathe himself. What he has is a father with two traits: love and endurance. He loves his son and he is the one pedaling, running, and swimming every mile of every race – doing what Rick can never do. Yet, with every race, Rick is counted as having completed it. Every recognition, every success, and every award given to his father is imputed to Rick because of the love and victory of his father.

- Maybe this is what Paul meant in **Romans 8:37** – “*in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*”

Application: **1 John 4:10-11** - *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if **God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.***

1. Throw down self-righteousness. It's only pride. It's not the love of Jesus.
2. Be confidently clear that you serve Jesus.
3. Treat them like Jesus.
4. Pray for them.

RECAP

- The message of the gospel has been consistent for 2,000 years.
- Out of love and for His glory, Jesus does a GREAT exchange: our sin for His righteousness. This is called **imputed righteousness**.
- Jesus traded Himself for His people and took the punishment they deserved. This is called **penal substitution**.
- God gives us an abundance of gifts with salvation! 1. New life, 2. Sin removed, 3. Freedom, 4. Right-standing with God, 5. Adoption into His family, 6. Security in our salvation, 7. Heavenly inheritance, 8. Daily growth to be more like Jesus, 9. The Holy Spirit, 10. Purpose.

Challenge 1: Be sacrificial in some area you don't want to.

Challenge 2: Ask the Lord to reveal and empower you to put to death an idol.

Challenge 3: Love someone enough to tell them you're a Christian this week.

Bonus: Begin bringing your Bible every Wednesday.

~ *Soli DEO Gloria*