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How many of you have had Chicken Pox? I have had that blessing.

Consider this scenario: You go to the doctor – one that has been highly recommended. After some questions, some poking and prodding, listening to your lungs and heart He gives you his diagnosis – you have Chicken Pox.

Smiling, he then says: “I know just the treatment for this that will have you back to normal in no time!”

He goes into the other room and returns with some 600 grit wet/dry sandpaper and a bottle of rubbing alcohol. He wets the sandpaper with alcohol – to sterilize it – and then starts sanding the blisters.

Would you go back for a second visit or would you seek a second opinion?

Simply trying to erase the outward symptoms of a disease does not cure the disease. It may make you look or feel a bit better – although I doubt it in this case – but, it doesn’t cure the disease.

With COVID-19 we are seeing all kinds of symptoms. I was at the hospital yesterday for a CT Scan and when they asked me if I had any of the symptoms of it, and they could not list all the symptoms in one breath.

There is no cure for it yet, it simply has to run its course. In this case, treatment involves trying to minimize the damaging effects of the symptoms long enough for the body’s immune system to eliminate the virus.

Thousands of people around the globe are studying it, trying to understand how it works. The better we understand it, the better we are at dealing with it. And, the more likely we are to develop a cure.

So, what does all this have to do with spiritual things? What can this teach us about the “cure” for our spiritual problems?

Our Spiritual Disease

We, as Christians tend to focus on the outward expressions of sin – our behavior. We think that when we’re dealing with our sinful actions, we are dealing with the problem of sin in our lives.

When we recognize that we need more patience and try to work on it, we feel like we’re on the right track. The problem is, we are not dealing with the root problem, just one of the symptoms.

Trying to improve on my patience is a lot like trying to lower my temperature when I have a fever of 103. It is not something I can do. I can try to act more patient. But, if I still feel impatient inside – which is often the case – I haven’t actually become more patient, I’ve just gotten better at hiding it.

All of our sinful actions, thoughts, and attitudes are symptoms of a deeper problem. And they can’t be fixed without dealing with that problem.

We find what this problem is in [Romans 8](#):

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.
([Romans 8:5-6](#), NLT)

Your actions are driven by who is in control of your life. If your sinful nature is calling the shots, then your actions will come from a place of selfishness. It will produce actions of the sort Paul describes in [Galatians 5](#):

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. ([Galatians 5:19-21](#), NLT)

When the Holy Spirit is in charge, your life will be characterized by actions that reflect God’s love:

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!
([Galatians 5:22-23](#), NLT)

Godlessness

Let's look at this from another perspective – using the [Transitive Property of Equality](#). I'm sure you remember it with fondness from your high school Geometry class. It's expressed in this simple formula:

$$\text{If } A = B \text{ \& } B = C, \text{ then } A = C$$

Most of us are familiar with the following verses:

... *God is love.* ([1 John 4:16](#), NIV)

This is one of the most definitive statements in Scripture. This is Who God is. The more we understand God, the more we will understand love.

Jesus made it clear that love is also the basis of God's law. When He was asked which one was most important, He said this:

"The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." (Quoting [Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#) & [Leviticus 19:18](#).)
([Mark 12:29-31](#), NLT)

Putting this all together we get this:

$$\text{If God} = \text{Love} \text{ \& } \text{Law} = \text{Love}, \text{ then God} = \text{Law}$$

The law, especially as expressed in the 10 Commandments, is a definition of who God is and what He is all about. We cannot separate God's law from who He is.

And then we have this classic verse defining sin:

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ([1 John 3:4](#), NIV)

Sin is bigger than just breaking some rules, it is living a life that is centered outside of the law. A life where we try to make up our own rules.

So what is the point?

$$\text{If God} = \text{Law} \text{ \& } \text{Sin} = \text{Lawlessness}, \text{ then Sin} = \text{Godlessness}$$

The real spiritual disease we are dealing with is Godlessness, or not being connected to God. This is Sin (with a capital S) as opposed to sins, which are the symptoms. This is what causes all the problems. This is why just working on our behavior will never make us into God's people. That's like treating Chicken Pox with sandpaper. It may make us look a bit different, but it doesn't solve the problem.

Sin (with a capital S) – Godlessness – can only be solved by becoming connected to God.

This is why Jesus gave the answer He did when people asked Him, on the day after He fed the 5,000:

“We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?”

Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.”
([John 6:28-29](#), NLT)

He didn’t give them to do, but gave them a relationship to nurture. God wants to be connected to you and me through Jesus.

This is what Jesus is inviting us to deal with when He made this invitation:

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”
([Matthew 11:28-30](#), NLT)

The solution is coming to Jesus and staying with Him.

This is why He is portrayed like this in Revelation:

“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” ([Revelation 3:20](#), NLT)

This connection looks like time spent in fellowship with a friend.

God wanting you to be connected to Him!

Why?

Because the disease called Sin (with a capital S) – Godlessness – is 100% fatal without divine intervention.

But it is curable. A cure is 100% guaranteed when you’re connected to Jesus!

Being connected to God is a life or death matter.

No Condemnation?

Paul makes an interesting statement in the middle of the book of Romans. He said:

I have discovered this principle of life – that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God’s law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a

miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?
(Romans 7:21-24, NLT)

These are words we can all identify with. Thy symptoms of sin keep showing up, even after we have given ourselves to Jesus.

How many times have we wanted to do the right thing only to find ourselves doing the wrong thing.

Or, how often have we wanted to stop doing some bad thing, but our will power fails us and we end up doing it anyway?

Paul gives this hopeful answer to his heart wrenching questions:

Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord ... (Romans 7:25, NLT)

The answer to breaking the cycle is in getting connected to Jesus.

And then he begins Romans 8 with this powerful statement:

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1, NLT)

At first glance, this sounds a bit far fetched. We know even after we have been connected to Jesus, we are far from perfect. We are still plagued with sinful thoughts and actions.

The problem is we are focusing on the symptoms of the disease, not the cure.

The real disease is “Godlessness” – living disconnect from God. The cure is simply asking Jesus to take control of your life.

Then, at that moment, God credits you with a complete cure – not because you’re good or have actually changed, but because Jesus has covered your Sin – Godlessness - with His perfect life and absolute righteousness. His perfection stands in place of your sinfulness.

That’s why there is no condemnation when you are in Christ Jesus. He knows you’re not completely cured and there will still be sinful thoughts and actions. He also knows that if you stay with Him, sin will start losing its power over you and righteous thoughts and good actions will follow.

We learned this from our study in Romans ([click here](#) to download a copy). When you ask Jesus to take control of your life, at that moment God frees you from the *Penalty of Sin* and starts freeing you from the *Power of Sin* as well! (See also [Steps to Christ, page 62.](#))

As you continue applying the cure to your life – which simply means consciously staying with God, your life will change.

Just like when you’re sick and you start getting better, the symptoms decrease. Your sinful thoughts and actions will decrease and you will find yourself living the way you were designed to live!

This is wonderful news!

We continually apply the cure by praying this prayer:

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

([Psalm 139:23-24](#), NLT)

And then following this advice:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. ([Proverbs 3:5-6](#), NIV)

If this is not what you're doing, don't lose another day.

Notes

Text you find in [this color](#) is a link to more information. It may take you to the Bible verse in context and/or in several different translations utilizing [BibleGateway.com](#). In some cases, it may take you to a website where there is additional information. And, it may take you to a PDF copy of previous sermons in this series.

Previous Messages in this Series (click on the title to download it)

- **May 9, 2020** – *Dead or Alive?* ([click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)

Scripture References

Psalm 139 (NLT): *O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. ²You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. ³You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. ⁴You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. ⁵You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!*

⁷I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! ⁸If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. ⁹If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, ¹⁰even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. ¹¹I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night – ¹²but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

¹³You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous – how well I know it. ¹⁵You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. ¹⁶You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

¹⁷How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! ¹⁸I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

¹⁹O God, if only you would destroy the wicked! Get out of my life, you murderers! ²⁰They blaspheme you; your enemies misuse your name. ²¹O LORD, shouldn't I hate those who hate you? Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you? ²²Yes, I hate them with total hatred, for your enemies are my enemies.

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

([Psalm 139](#), NLT)

Proverbs 3:5-12 (NIV): *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

⁷ *Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. ⁸ This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.*

⁹ *Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

¹¹ *My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, ¹² because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (Proverbs 3:5-12, NIV)*

Mark 12:28-34 (NLT): *One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

²⁹ *Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. ³⁰ And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' ³¹ The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." (Quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5 & Leviticus 19:18.)*

³² *The teacher of religious law replied, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. ³³ And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law."*

³⁴ *Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions. (Mark 12:28-34, NLT)*

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT): *Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT)*

John 6:28-29 (NLT): *They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"*

Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent." (John 6:28-29, NLT)

Romans 7:21-25 (NLT): *I have discovered this principle of life – that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. ²² I love God's law with all my heart. ²³ But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. ²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind*

I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.
(Romans 7:21-25, NLT)

Romans 8:1-17 (NLT): *So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. ³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴ He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.*

⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. ⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. (Romans 8:1-17, NLT)

1 Corinthians 13 (NLT): *If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. ³ If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.*

⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

⁸ Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! ⁹ Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! ¹⁰ But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. ¹² Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

¹³ Three things will last forever – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.

(1 Corinthians 13, NLT)

Galatians 5:16-26 (NLT): So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

¹⁹ When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. (Galatians 5:16-26, NLT)

1 John 3 (NIV): See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. ¹⁰ This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

(1 John 3, NIV)

1 John 4:7-21 (NIV): Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone

acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (1 John 4:7-21, NIV)

Revelation 3:14-22 (NLT): “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen – the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s new creation:

¹⁵ “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! ¹⁶ But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. ¹⁸ So I advise you to buy gold from me – gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. ¹⁹ I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.

²⁰ “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. ²¹ Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

²² “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.” (Revelation 3:14-22, NLT)

E.G. White References

Steps to Christ, pages 62-63: *The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been – just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents – perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.*

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have

no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works – works of righteousness, obedience.

So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. (Steps to Christ, pages 62-63)