

# The Incredible Solution

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## Part I

The last two sermons in this series have been focused on some really bad news that affects each of us. To sum it up:

1. You and I are infected with sin and the gap between you and salvation is too great to overcome. You don't have what it takes and there is no chance of you getting there on your own.
2. The one thing God hates is sin. He loves people (see [John 3:16-17](#), [Romans 5:6-8](#), & [Romans 8:31-39](#)) – even wicked people. He loves each of us dearly and will do everything He can to separate us from our sin. But, if you choose to hold on to sin (in any form), in the end, He will give up trying and you will be destroyed along with the sin you refuse to let go of.
3. All of us, even us “Christians”, fall short of what God wants from us. The best righteousness you and I have to offer qualifies as garbage.

These are not my words – I'm not making this stuff up. This is what Paul tells us in the first three chapters of Romans. Paul concludes the bad news with this statement about the law:

*Its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. ([Romans 3:19-20](#), NLT)*

For more on the bad news, you may download the last two sermons at my blog or from the weekly email newsletter – Golden News – or clicking on the following links ([The Big Problem, Part 1](#) and [The Big Problem, Part 2](#)).

## Some Really Good News!

Paul now transitions into the Good News! The rest of the book of Romans is expanding on this wonderful news in some way. And, when we understand the good news, the bad news is not really all that bad. Reading from Romans 3:21:

*But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law ... We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.*

*For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when*

*they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood ... He makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.*

*Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. (Romans 3:21-28, NLT)*

## Your Debt

Imagine with me for a moment, that you are in debt. Perhaps you have a mortgage on your home, payments on your car, and several credit cards with a fairly high balance.

I have heard that the average credit card debt in the United States is somewhere between \$50,000 - \$75,000 and trending higher.

Let's imagine you approach everything by stretching the limits so you have more than \$100,000 in credit card debt.

Now, imagine that next month, when you receive your statements, you notice something strange going on.

The first statement you get – from one of the airline credit cards – has a zero balance. It has been paid in full! You wonder what is going on and determine you need to make a phone call.

But before you do, you open the mortgage statement and see that it has a zero balance – it too has been paid in full!

You start tearing open each of your statements, and each one has a zero balance – someone has paid your entire debt and all your accounts have been paid in full!

What a feeling of relief, you sit there taking it in, feeling the relief wash over you!

And then you remember, this is just a dream! I'm sorry to burst the bubble. It's a beautiful dream but it seems too good to be true. And it is, except when it comes to sin and salvation!

## God's Plan

In the first part of Romans, Paul uses this type of terminology to illustrate an important spiritual truth we often have a hard time wrapping our minds around.

He is using the language of debt and repayment to illustrate salvation, and especially a concept we call Justification.

Listen to what he says about Abraham in Romans 4:

*What did he [Abraham] discover about being made right with God? If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. For the Scriptures tell us, (Romans 4:2-3, NLT)*

And then Paul quotes **Genesis 15:6**:

*"Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."  
(Romans 4:3, NLT)*

The more literal translation for "God counted him as righteous ..." is "it was credited to him as righteousness" implying that this credit was paying a debt Abraham could not pay. Reading on:

*When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. But people are counted as righteous,*

Again, the literal translation here is "credited as righteous":

*But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it: (Romans 4:4-6, NLT)*

Here too, the literal translation is "credited as righteous." Paul then quotes **Psalms 32:1-2**:

*"Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them." (Romans 4:7-8, NIV)*

Did you catch that last sentence?

*"Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them." (Romans 4:8, NIV)*

This almost sounds too good to be true.

How can you and I ever get to the point where God will never count our sin against us?

In this passage, Paul is telling us that because of sin, we owe a debt. This debt will bring about our eternal destruction through the fire God uses to cleanse the earth of sin. It doesn't matter how good we may look on the outside, you and I do not have what it takes to pay off this debt.

Jesus came to this earth and through His perfect life and His sacrifice on the cross paid the debt sin demands for every person who has ever lived. He took on the penalty of sin for you and me. There is no one too sinful to qualify. Jesus put it this way in His conversation with Nicodemus:

*"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NLT)*

## Pail in Full

The good news Paul is sharing is this:

*Our debt will kill us, it's too great for us to pay. Jesus has already paid our debt in full and now offers us a full pardon. The only condition is that we recognize our helplessness and accept His offer. When you and I put our faith in Jesus and invite Him to take control of our lives, our sin will never be counted against us!*

Remember how you were feeling a few minutes ago as you were contemplating the gift of being completely debt free? It's like that, only better. It doesn't just affect what is going on here and now, it secures our place in a perfect place, full of love and free from death and pain, forever!

The best summary of this I know of is found in a couple of paragraphs from the little best-selling devotional book, *Steps to Christ*. We have looked at it several times over the past few years, but it is especially pertinent to what we are exploring today. It is from page 62:

*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. (SC, page 62)*

This is absolutely incredible news – your debt is paid in full.

This is what we refer to in theological circles as *Justification*. This word is also a financial term. How many of us have tried to justify our checking account? This means to make everything balance correctly.

In terms of our salvation, justification means that we are saved from the *penalty* of our sin. We no longer stand before God as someone in debt, but as someone perfect in Jesus.

In Romans 5 Paul wrote:

*When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:6-8, NLT)*

Paul goes on to discuss how sin entered the world through one person and similarly, salvation comes as the result of one person's life and death. And then he concludes chapter 5 with these words:

*God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:20-21, NLT)*

This is really good news! Jesus has done what you and I cannot do. He offers to take away the penalty of sin, the debt you and I cannot pay, and give us the results of His life and death – perfect standing with God, clean and debt free!

## **What Are You Going to Do?**

The Apostle John wrote:

*... He [God the Father] has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.*

*I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13, NLT)*

To me, this becomes a no-brainer. It seems obvious what we need to do.

With so much on the line, and the offer of such a wonderful gift why would we ever want to put off responding to Jesus' invitation?

*"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."*  
(Matthew 11:28, NLT)

It's the only way to salvation. I recommend you do it now!

Let's pray.

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## 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 Sermons in this Series

- January 5, 2019: **Welcome to Rome (Romans, Part 1)**
- January 26, 2019: **The Big Problem, Part 1 (Romans, Part 2a)**
- February 2, 2019: **The Big Problem, Part 2 (Romans, Part 2b)**

## Scripture References

**Genesis 15:1-7 (NLT):** *Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.”*

<sup>2</sup> *But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son? Since you’ve given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. <sup>3</sup> You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.”*

<sup>4</sup> *Then the LORD said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.” <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!”*

<sup>6</sup> *And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.*

<sup>7</sup> *Then the LORD told him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession.” (Genesis 15:1-7, NLT)*

**Psalm 32 (NLT):** *Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!*

<sup>2</sup> *Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! <sup>3</sup> When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. <sup>4</sup> Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Interlude*

<sup>5</sup> *Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.” And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. Interlude*

<sup>6</sup> *Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. <sup>7</sup> For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. Interlude*

<sup>8</sup> The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. <sup>9</sup> Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.”

<sup>10</sup> Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD. <sup>11</sup> So rejoice in the LORD and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure! (Psalm 32, NLT)

**Psalm 103 (NLT):** Let all that I am praise the LORD; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name. <sup>2</sup> Let all that I am praise the LORD; may I never forget the good things he does for me. <sup>3</sup> He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. <sup>4</sup> He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. <sup>5</sup> He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle’s!

<sup>6</sup> The LORD gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly.

<sup>7</sup> He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel. <sup>8</sup> The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. <sup>9</sup> He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. <sup>10</sup> He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. <sup>11</sup> For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. <sup>12</sup> He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. <sup>13</sup> The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. <sup>14</sup> For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust. <sup>15</sup> Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die. <sup>16</sup> The wind blows, and we are gone – as though we had never been here. <sup>17</sup> But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear him. His salvation extends to the children’s children <sup>18</sup> of those who are faithful to his covenant, of those who obey his commandments!

<sup>19</sup> The LORD has made the heavens his throne; from there he rules over everything.

<sup>20</sup> Praise the LORD, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. <sup>21</sup> Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will! <sup>22</sup> Praise the LORD, everything he has created, everything in all his kingdom.

Let all that I am praise the LORD. (Psalm 103, NLT)

**Jeremiah 3:12-15 (NLT):** Therefore, go and give this message to Israel. This is what the LORD says:

“O Israel, my faithless people, come home to me again, for I am merciful. I will not be angry with you forever. <sup>13</sup> Only acknowledge your guilt. Admit that you rebelled against the LORD your God and committed adultery against him by worshiping idols under every green tree. Confess that you refused to listen to my voice. I, the LORD, have spoken!

<sup>14</sup> “Return home, you wayward children,” says the Lord, “for I am your master. I will bring you back to the land of Israel – one from this town and two from that family – from wherever you are scattered. <sup>15</sup> And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will guide you with knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:12-15, NLT)

**Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NLT):** *“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. <sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.*

<sup>33</sup> *“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup> No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34, NIV)*

**Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT):** *And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations. (Ezekiel 36:26-27, 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. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT)*

**Matthew 11:28-30 (the Message):** *“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” (Matthew 11:28-30, the Message)*

**John 3:14-17 (NLT):** *And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*

<sup>16</sup> *“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.” (John 3:14-17, NLT)*

**Romans 3:21 – 6:23 (NLT):** *But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. <sup>22</sup> We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.*

<sup>23</sup> *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. <sup>24</sup> Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. <sup>25</sup> For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, <sup>26</sup> for*

he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. <sup>28</sup> So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

<sup>29</sup> After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is.

<sup>30</sup> There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. <sup>31</sup> Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law.

### The Faith of Abraham

**4** Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? <sup>2</sup> If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. <sup>3</sup> For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." (Genesis 15:6)

<sup>4</sup> When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. <sup>5</sup> But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. <sup>6</sup> David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it:

<sup>7</sup> "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight.

<sup>8</sup> Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of sin." (Psalm 32:1-2)

<sup>9</sup> Now, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also for uncircumcised Gentiles? Well, we have been saying that Abraham was counted as righteous by God because of his faith. <sup>10</sup> But how did this happen? Was he counted as righteous only after he was circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? Clearly, God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!

<sup>11</sup> Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous – even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith. <sup>12</sup> And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

<sup>13</sup> Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. <sup>14</sup> If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. <sup>15</sup> For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

<sup>16</sup> So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. <sup>17</sup> That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." (Genesis 17:5) This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

<sup>18</sup> Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping – believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" (Genesis 15:5) <sup>19</sup> And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead – and so was Sarah's womb.

<sup>20</sup> Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. <sup>21</sup> He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. <sup>22</sup> And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. <sup>23</sup> And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded <sup>24</sup> for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. <sup>25</sup> He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

### Faith Brings Joy

**5** Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. <sup>2</sup> Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

<sup>3</sup> We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. <sup>4</sup> And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. <sup>5</sup> And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

<sup>6</sup> When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. <sup>7</sup> Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. <sup>8</sup> But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. <sup>9</sup> And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. <sup>10</sup> For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. <sup>11</sup> So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

### Adam and Christ Contrasted

<sup>12</sup> When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. <sup>13</sup> Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was

not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. <sup>14</sup> Still, everyone died – from the time of Adam to the time of Moses – even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come.

<sup>15</sup> But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. <sup>16</sup> And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. <sup>17</sup> For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. <sup>19</sup> Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

<sup>20</sup> God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. <sup>21</sup> So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Sin's Power Is Broken**

**6** Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? <sup>2</sup> Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? <sup>3</sup> Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? <sup>4</sup> For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

<sup>5</sup> Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. <sup>7</sup> For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. <sup>8</sup> And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. <sup>10</sup> When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. <sup>11</sup> So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. <sup>13</sup> Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do

what is right for the glory of God. <sup>14</sup> Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

<sup>15</sup> Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! <sup>16</sup> Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. <sup>17</sup> Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. <sup>18</sup> Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

<sup>19</sup> Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

<sup>20</sup> When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. <sup>21</sup> And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. <sup>22</sup> But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (**Romans 3:21 - 6:23**, NLT)

**Galatians 2:11-21 (NLT):** But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. <sup>12</sup> When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. <sup>13</sup> As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

<sup>14</sup> When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?"

"You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. <sup>16</sup> Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."

<sup>17</sup> But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin?

Absolutely not! <sup>18</sup> Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down.

<sup>19</sup> For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law – I stopped trying to meet all its requirements – so that I might live for God. <sup>20</sup> My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. <sup>21</sup> I do not treat the grace of God as

meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die. (**Galatians 2:11-21**, NLT)

**Ephesians 2:4-10 (NLT):** *But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, <sup>5</sup> that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) <sup>6</sup> For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.*

<sup>8</sup> God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup> Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (**Ephesians 2:4-10**, NLT)

**Titus 3:3-7 (NLT):** *Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other.*

<sup>4</sup> But – When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup> He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. <sup>7</sup> Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life. (**Titus 3:3-7**, NLT)

**1 John 5:10-13 (NLT):** *All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son.*

<sup>11</sup> And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

<sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

<sup>13</sup> I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. (**1 John 5:10-13**, NLT)

## E.G. White Resources

**Desire of Ages, pages 309-310:** *The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness. In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness. A jealous regard for what is termed theological truth often accompanies a hatred of genuine truth as made manifest in life. The darkest chapters of history are burdened with the record of crimes committed by bigoted religionists. The Pharisees claimed to be children of Abraham, and boasted of their possession of the oracles of God; yet these advantages did not preserve them from selfishness, malignity, greed for gain, and the basest*

*hypocrisy. They thought themselves the greatest religionists of the world, but their so-called orthodoxy led them to crucify the Lord of glory.*

*The same danger still exists. Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. But they have not brought the truth into practical life. They have not believed and loved it, therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through sanctification of the truth. Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world.*

*The righteousness which Christ taught is conformity of heart and life to the revealed will of God. Sinful men can become righteous only as they have faith in God and maintain a vital connection with Him. Then true godliness will elevate the thoughts and ennoble the life. Then the external forms of religion accord with the Christian's internal purity. Then the ceremonies required in the service of God are not meaningless rites, like those of the hypocritical Pharisees.*

**(Desire of Ages, pages 309-310)**

**Desire of Ages, page 324:** *When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.*

*"The last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so," said Jesus, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation." There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven's invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.*

*In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead listen to the agents of Satan, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God. (Desire of Ages, page 324)*

**Desire of Ages, page 357:** *Jesus continues: As you confess Me before men, so I will confess you before God and the holy angels. You are to be My witnesses upon earth, channels through which My grace can flow for the healing of the world. So I will be your representative in heaven. The Father beholds not your faulty character, but He sees you as clothed in My perfection. I am the medium through which Heaven's blessings shall come to you. And everyone who confesses Me by sharing My sacrifice for the lost shall be confessed as a sharer in the glory and joy of the redeemed.*

*He who would confess Christ must have Christ abiding in him. He cannot communicate that which he has not received. The disciples might speak fluently on doctrines, they might repeat the words of Christ Himself; but unless they possessed Christlike meekness and love, they were not confessing Him. A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession. Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by shunning life's burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behavior, by the love of their own opinions, by justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them. And "whosoever shall deny Me before men," He says, "him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven."*

*The Saviour bade His disciples not to hope that the world's enmity to the gospel would be overcome, and that after a time its opposition would cease. He said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." This creating of strife is not the effect of the gospel, but the result of opposition to it. Of all persecution the hardest to bear is variance in the home, the estrangement of dearest earthly friends. But Jesus declares, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me." (Desire of Ages, page 357)*

**Desire of Ages, page 385:** *For the moment the interest of the hearers was awakened. They exclaimed, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" They had been performing many and burdensome works in order to recommend themselves to God; and they were ready to hear of any new observance by which they could secure greater merit. Their question meant, What shall we do that we may deserve heaven? What is the price we are required to pay in order to obtain the life to come? (Desire of Ages, page 385)*

**Desire of Ages, page 389:** *To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding*

*His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated.*

*But even these figures fail to present the privilege of the believer's relation to Christ. Jesus said, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." As the Son of God lived by faith in the Father, so are we to live by faith in Christ. So fully was Jesus surrendered to the will of God that the Father alone appeared in His life. Although tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world untainted by the evil that surrounded Him. Thus we also are to overcome as Christ overcame.*

*Are you a follower of Christ? Then all that is written concerning the spiritual life is written for you, and may be attained through uniting yourself to Jesus. Is your zeal languishing? has your first love grown cold? Accept again of the proffered love of Christ. Eat of His flesh, drink of His blood, and you will become one with the Father and with the Son. (**Desire of Ages, page 389**)*

**Desire of Ages, pages 390-391:** *As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another's mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know "what saith the Lord."*

*In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that I by believing in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. The experiences related in God's word are to be my experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and 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**. As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.*

*By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives*

*the divine similitude. This is what it means to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.*

*Christ had spoken a sacred, eternal truth regarding the relation between Himself and His followers. He knew the character of those who claimed to be His disciples, and His words tested their faith. He declared that they were to believe and act upon His teaching. All who received Him would partake of His nature, and be conformed to His character. This involved the relinquishment of their cherished ambitions. It required the complete surrender of themselves to Jesus. They were called to become self-sacrificing, meek and lowly in heart. They must walk in the narrow path traveled by the Man of Calvary, if they would share in the gift of life and the glory of heaven. (Desire of Ages, pages 390-391)*

**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)*

