

Concluding Comments



We have worked our way through the Book of Romans these past few months. We have covered the major themes, but there is lots of Good News in there we haven't touched on.

The last chapter and a half of Romans is mostly greeting, recognizing people in Rome he had perhaps even sent there to build up the church there. And, greetings from the people who were still with Paul in Corinth when the letter was written.

A Look Back

In between all the greetings we find a couple of hidden gems – statements of summary, looking back at some things Paul has focused on earlier. We find one of those statements in the middle of Romans 15:

... By God's grace, I am a special messenger from Christ Jesus to you Gentiles.
(Romans 15:15-16, NLT)

And then, this statement:

... I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:15-16, NLT)

He wants to present us – most of us are Gentiles – as an acceptable offering to God.

What makes an offering acceptable?

An offering always had to be perfect, the best there was. If it was an animal, it had to be without a blemish of any kind, couldn't even have a little skin tack or wart under its arm. If it was crop, it was the first things harvested, and again, it had to be perfect.

How likely is it that any person is perfect, an acceptable offering?

Paul has made it clear throughout the Book of Romans that none of us are perfect and that the best any of us has to offer in the way of righteousness is about as attractive as garbage. Not a pretty picture.

And, according to Scripture, there is no way we can make ourselves any better.

This is where the Good News comes in. Paul has made it clear that when we come to Jesus and give ourselves to Him, it is His righteousness that covers us because He frees us from the *Penalty of Sin*. And as we stay with Him, He also frees us from the *Power of Sin* through the work of the Holy Spirit, while continuing to free us from the *Penalty of Sin*.

These words from the little international bestselling devotional book, *Steps to Christ*, sum it up well:

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.

Free from the *Penalty of Sin!*

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 ...

Free from the *Power of Sin!*

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 ...

“Imputed” means credited or given – not something we have earned.

... 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)

The righteousness that is *wrought by His Spirit working in and through us* is God’s Spirit at work to free us from the *Power of Sin*. Then, our lives will more and more reflect harmony with His plan for us.

The only way we can be an acceptable offering to God is by coming to Jesus just like we are, and give ourselves to Him. Then, and only then, will we be an acceptable offering to God – because Jesus perfect character stands in place of our sinful one.

A Promise

Next, in the last few verses of Romans, Paul shares this promise:

Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong ... (Romans 16:25, NLT)

This promise is echoed in some of Paul’s other letters as well. To the Philippian believers he wrote:

I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6, CSB)

To the believers who lived in Ephesus he wrote:

Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us – to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. (Ephesians 3:16-21, CSB)

To Paul, everything centered in Jesus. Christianity, to him, was not a religion or a system of beliefs; it was a relationship with Jesus. And He had confidence that Jesus has the desire and the power to take care of whatever is needed.

A Choice

And then, Paul presents us with a choice:

... this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him. (Romans 16:26, NLT)

Paul's letter was not written to stimulate spiritual dialogue. He was not trying to answer a few questions so we would have our doctrines right. Paul was looking for changed lives. He wanted us to love and serve Jesus!

This is not a casual, social type of Gospel. The word "Christian" means "follower of Christ." Paul, in the letter to the Romans, wants us to really be followers of Jesus. He is pushing for us to make Jesus our number one priority.

He is reflecting here what he said in Romans 12:

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice ... Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think ... (Romans 12:1-2, NLT)

This letter is about the transforming power of God. It's about God working in your life to:

- Free you from the *Penalty of Sin* – when you give yourselves to Him, Jesus' life stands in place of your life and you are viewed by God as perfect – just as if you had never sinned.
- Free you from the *Power of Sin* – as long as you stay with Him, you are viewed as perfect as He works to change your life for the better and make you into someone who's life attracts people to Jesus.
- Free you from the *Presence of Sin* – as a result of His work in your life, and because of the perfection of Jesus, when He comes again He will take you to a home free of all the influence and burden of sin.

In Ephesians, Paul put it this way:

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 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 2:8-10, NLT)

Salvation is never a reward for anything we have done. It is all based on what Jesus did. When we accept this salvation and stay with Jesus day after day, He makes our life into a Masterpiece of His creative power. And as a result of His work we will more clearly reflect Him in our day to day lives.

I love this word picture found in the *Desire of Ages*:

In Christ is the tenderness of the shepherd, the affection of the parent, and the matchless grace of the compassionate Saviour ... The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing ... Words alone cannot tell it. Let it be reflected in the character and manifested in the life. Christ is sitting for His portrait in every disciple ... In every one Christ's long-suffering love, His holiness, meekness, mercy, and truth are to be manifested to the world. (Desire of Ages, page 826)

Christ is *sitting for His portrait* in your life. He wants your life to reflect His *long-suffering love, His holiness, meekness, mercy, and truth*. This will only happen as you stay with Him day-by-day, focusing your attention on Him.

In the Book of Hebrews, which many people believe was written by Paul, it says:

... Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith ... (Hebrews 12:1-2, NLT)

This is your job. This is the work you must do in order for God to do His work (see [John 6:28-29](#)). The more you focus on Jesus, the more He is able to free you from the *Power of Sin*, and the more you will reflect His love and holiness.

You focus on Jesus by spending regular time talking to Him in prayer, reading about Him in His Word (the Bible), and by following the instructions He gives you.

If you do this, it will change your life. You will become more like Him.

If each of us in the church would do this, we would see reformation and growth like we have never seen before.

This is what it means to offer yourselves as a *Living Sacrifice*. This is what Paul wanted for you more than anything. This is what his letter to the Romans is all about.

I urge you to do it today, now!

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)**
- February 16, 2019: **The Incredible Solution, Part 1 (Romans, Part 3a)**
- March 2, 2019: **The Incredible Solution, Part 2 (Romans, Part 3b)**
- March 30, 2019: **The Wonderful Promise, Part 1 (Romans, Part 4a)**
- April 6, 2019: **The Wonderful Promise, Part 2 (Romans, Part 4b)**
- May 4, 2019: **The Wonderful Promise, Part 3 (Romans, Part 4c)**
- June 15, 2019: **People of the Promise (Romans, Part 5)**
- June 23, 2019: **A Living Sacrifice (Romans, Part 6)**
- June 29, 2019: **A Living Sacrifice Defined (Romans, Part 7)**

Scripture References

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NIV): *“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. ³²It 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.*

³³ *“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. ³⁴No 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. ²⁷And 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)*

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 1:1-17 (NLT): *This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. ² God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. ³ The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David’s family line, ⁴ and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.*

⁶ And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ. ⁷ I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

God’s Good News

⁸ Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith in him is being talked about all over the world. ⁹ God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by spreading the Good News about his Son.

¹⁰ One of the things I always pray for is the opportunity, God willing, to come at last to see you.

¹¹ For I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord. ¹² When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours.

¹³ I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles. ¹⁴ For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. ¹⁵ So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News.

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes – the Jew first and also the Gentile. ¹⁷ This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say (Habakkuk 2:4), “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” (Romans 1:1-17, NLT)

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT): *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2, NLT)*

Romans 15:14 – 16:27 (NLT): *I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them. ¹⁵ Even so, I have been bold enough to write about some of these points, knowing that all you need is this reminder. For by God's grace, ¹⁶ I am a special messenger from Christ Jesus to you Gentiles. I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ So I have reason to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God. ¹⁸ Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them. ¹⁹ They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum.*

²⁰ *My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else. ²¹ I have been following the plan spoken of in the Scriptures, where it says,*

“Those who have never been told about him will see, and those who have never heard of him will understand.” (Isaiah 52:15)

²² *In fact, my visit to you has been delayed so long because I have been preaching in these places.*

Paul's Travel Plans

²³ *But now I have finished my work in these regions, and after all these long years of waiting, I am eager to visit you. ²⁴ I am planning to go to Spain, and when I do, I will stop off in Rome. And after I have enjoyed your fellowship for a little while, you can provide for my journey.*

²⁵ *But before I come, I must go to Jerusalem to take a gift to the believers there. ²⁶ For you see, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were glad to do this because they feel they owe a real debt to them. Since the Gentiles received the spiritual blessings of the Good News from the believers in Jerusalem, they feel the least they can do in return is to help them financially. ²⁸ As soon as I have delivered this money and completed this good deed of theirs, I will come to see you on my way to Spain. ²⁹ And I am sure that when I come, Christ will richly bless our time together.*

³⁰ *Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to join in my struggle by praying to God for me. Do this because of your love for me, given to you by the Holy Spirit.*

³¹ *Pray that I will be rescued from those in Judea who refuse to obey God. Pray also that the believers there will be willing to accept the donation I am taking to Jerusalem. ³² Then, by the will of God, I will be able to come to you with a joyful heart, and we will be an encouragement to each other.*

³³ *And now may God, who gives us his peace, be with you all. Amen.*

Paul Greets His Friends

16 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. ² Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.

³ Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus. ⁴ In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches.

⁵ Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ. ⁶ Give my greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for your benefit. ⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did. ⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

¹⁰ Greet Apelles, a good man whom Christ approves. And give my greetings to the believers from the household of Aristobulus. ¹¹ Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet the Lord's people from the household of Narcissus. ¹² Give my greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, the Lord's workers, and to dear Persis, who has worked so hard for the Lord. ¹³ Greet Rufus, whom the Lord picked out to be his very own; and also his dear mother, who has been a mother to me.

¹⁴ Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who meet with them. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas and all the believers who meet with them. ¹⁶ Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

Paul's Final Instructions

¹⁷ And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. ¹⁸ Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people. ¹⁹ But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹ Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

²² I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, send my greetings, too, as one of the Lord's followers.

²³ Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.

²⁵ Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed his plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time. ²⁶ But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him. ²⁷ All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.

(Romans 15:14 - 16:27, NLT)

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (CSB): *The point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each person should do as he has decided in his heart – not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.* (2 Corinthians 9:6-8, CSB)

Ephesians 2:1-22 (NLT): *Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil – the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.*

⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ 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!) ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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.

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ 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.

Oneness and Peace in Christ

¹¹ Don’t forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called “uncircumcised heathens” by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. ¹² In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. ¹³ But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. ¹⁵ He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between

Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. ¹⁶ Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

¹⁷ He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. ¹⁸ Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

A Temple for the Lord

¹⁹ So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. ²⁰ Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. ²¹ We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. ²² Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

(**Ephesians 2:1-22**, NLT)

Ephesians 3:1-9 (NLT): When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles ... ² assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles. ³ As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. ⁴ As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. ⁵ God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

⁶ And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. ⁷ By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

⁸ Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. ⁹ I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning. (**Ephesians 3:1-9**, NLT)

Ephesians 3:16-21 (CSB): I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit, ¹⁷ and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, ¹⁹ and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us – ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (**Ephesians 3:16-21**, CSB)

Philippians 1:3-11 (CSB): *I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, ⁴ always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.*

⁹ *And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:3-11, CSB)*

1 Timothy 1:15-17 (NLT): *This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” – and I am the worst of them all. ¹⁶ But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷ All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:15-17, NLT)*

Hebrews 10:15-17 (NLT): *And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says, ¹⁶ “This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the LORD: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”*

¹⁷ *Then he says, “I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.” (Hebrews 10:15-17, NLT – quoting Jeremiah 31:33-34)*

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NLT): *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne. ³ Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won’t become weary and give up. (Hebrews 12:1-3, NLT)*

E.G. White Resources

Desire of Ages, page 826: *In Christ is the tenderness of the shepherd, the affection of the parent, and the matchless grace of the compassionate Saviour. His blessings He presents in the most alluring terms. He is not content merely to announce these blessings; He presents them in the most attractive way, to excite a desire to possess them. So His servants are to present the riches of the glory of the unspeakable Gift. The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing. “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people,*

saith your God.” “O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! ... He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.” [Isaiah 40:1, 9-11](#). Tell the people of Him who is “the Chiefest among ten thousand,” and the One “altogether lovely.” [The Song of Solomon 5:10, 16](#). Words alone cannot tell it. Let it be reflected in the character and manifested in the life. Christ is sitting for His portrait in every disciple. Every one God has predestinated to be “conformed to the image of His Son.” [Romans 8:29](#). In every one Christ's long-suffering love, His holiness, meekness, mercy, and truth are to be manifested to the world.

([Desire of Ages, page 826](#))

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](#))