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### BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan 2 Corinthians 3: 7-11 "A Greater Glory"

Winter 2025 TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth. Our text this morning is 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 7 through 11. It's joined, as you might expect, to the previous verse where Paul wrote; "...the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." (vs6b).

Verse 7;

<sup>7</sup> But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading *as* it was, <sup>8</sup> how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? <sup>9</sup> For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. <sup>10</sup> For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses *it*. <sup>11</sup> For if that which fades away *was* with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.

2 Corinthians 3: 7-11

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, it's great to be with Your people on this Sunday morning. It's cold and rainy outside, but it's warm and light in here and we have the Light of Your Word to shine on our hearts.

And I pray that You would shine it brightly
and that we would see ourselves as we should,
And we would understand Your Word
and all the blessings we have in the New Covenant of which we are part,
And the ministry of the Spirit which has brought us to an understanding
of Yourself and enlightens our minds that we might study these things
and understand more fully Your truth,

And how You are working with us and Your people—and working in the world.

So LORD, bless us with an understanding of this text of Scripture—illuminate our minds and give us gratitude for the grace that You've given to us through the Gospel and through the work of Your Son. So build us up in the faith we pray—and in so doing prepare us for the coming week that we would be good examples to those around us, and be a good witness to those we come in contact with.

LORD, we pray for the material needs that we have; they are many. We have a number of people who are dealing with sickness, and dealing with serious issues and procedures. You know them, and I pray that You'd bless them, and encourage and strengthen them.

Father, all of this reminds us that we are temporary in this world, and we are "dust" in this world. We are weak in and of ourselves and we need You constantly: Your strength, Your power, Your guidance.

Bless us now, Father, as we continue this service; may it be to Your glory and to our edification.

And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(*Message*) We often hear it said that the influence Christ has had on the world can be measured by the calendar we keep...we set our dates by His birth. History is divided into 'BC' and 'AD'. The practice of calculating the past and the present by Christ is biblical. Paul did it, not in the way that we do it, but in passages like ours this morning;

he did divide history around Christ. He explains that the Lord's coming ended one ministry and began another: 'The ministry of Moses ended', and 'the ministry of the Spirit began'.

And in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 7 through 11, Paul contrasts these two ministries—of the Law and the Gospel…and he says that, 'the Gospel is greater than the Law.' In fact, three times, (in verses 8, 9, and 11), he makes a comparison between the two and say that the Gospel is, 'much more glorious' than the Law and the Old Covenant. That's really the lesson here in our passage.

Paul gives it in two ways. First, the Gospel is greater than the Law because it gives life, while the Law brings death. And second, the Law was *temporary* while the Gospel is *eternal*. So we will develop our lesson around those two points which show how great our privileges and blessings are today.

Paul's teaching here is actually a continuation of what he wrote in verse 6, where he contrasted 'the Spirit' and 'the letter'. "The letter kills..." he wrote, "...but the Spirit gives life." (vs6b). Now in verse 7 he speaks of "the ministry of death"—and "the ministry of the Spirit" in verse 8. The contrast is the same: The "ministry of death" is, "the letter"—It is, 'the Law that kills'. "The letter" brings death, "but the Spirit gives life." (vs6b). So, "the ministry of the Spirit" is far greater and more glorious than that of the Law. That is the point Paul makes here.

Now he makes the point for two reasons. *First*, to correct a false impression that may have been given in verse 6, and *second*, to correct a false idea that was circulating in Corinth. The false idea is that, 'We are still under the Law'—that the Old Covenant is still enforced today, and we must live by the Law. That's what some of the teachers were teaching who had come to Corinth, (and that he will deal with later in this epistle).

It's an age old problem, one that is faced in every generation. Men naturally think that if they try to keep the Ten Commandments, just, 'Give it their best', that that's enough for God. This is the issue that Augustine dealt with against Pelagius, a British

monk who came to Rome and had a big influence there, particularly among the aristocracy.

Pelagius was a well-educated and effective teacher. He was moralist who denied original sin, denied that we inherited a sin nature from Adam, taught that men are *not* fallen and *not* infected by sin; and that men are capable of keeping God's Law perfectly.

He claimed to believe in grace. He used the word '*grace*'—but for Pelagius, 'grace' was both the Law, (which shows us the right way to live), <u>and</u> our natural ability to keep the Law...so, 'that's what we are to be doing...keeping the Law of Moses.'

Well, men who teach such things will always be popular, (as Pelagius was), because it's what people want to hear. This is '*natural religion*': 'You can earn your way to heaven. Your acts are meritorious with God.' ...So, 'That's what we're to be doing', as I said, and that's what Pelagius was telling the people of Rome, (as a contemporary of Augustine). And he was a big hit—they loved him there.

Well, Augustine responded, "What, therefore, do those very vain and perverse persons, who follow Pelagius, mean by saying that, 'The Law is that grace of God, which helps us avoid sin?' "

The Law can't help us avoid sin at all; it stirs it up. We cannot keep the Law no one can. And if we fail at all, in any way in keeping it, in the slightest way—if we keep the whole Law perfectly except for one, we've broken all of the Law. We must keep it perfectly.

Now, that's the testimony of the Law itself, Deuteronomy chapter27, verse 26. This is how Paul quotes it in Galatians 3, verse 10, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them."

'Keep everything'. If you're going to 'keep the Law', you've got to keep it all, you've got to keep it perfectly. In fact James, in James chapter 2, verse 10, makes the statement that, 'If we stumble in one, we've stumbled in all.' 'If we break one, we've broken it all.' It's like you're driving along, and a pebble strikes the windshield...and

there's a crack. Well, that may be a small crack, but the whole windshield's been cracked. And so is it is with the Law—to break one is to break it all.

This is always the issue that we have to deal with in every generation: 'Legalism', which is, 'salvation by law-keeping'—and legalistic tendencies. It was a problem in the church at Corinth. So Paul writes to correct it by explaining the function of the Law and showing that it has been eclipsed by, 'the Gospel of grace' and a New Covenant—which is far, far greater than the Old Covenant, a far greater ministry.

But Paul also wanted to make clear from his statement in verse 6 that he's not against the Law of Moses. He indicated that by saying this "ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory..." (vs7a). He's not disparaging the Law in the things that he said in verse 6, or any in this text. The Law is God's divine revelation; but the design of the Law and the effect, was 'to kill', or, as Paul explains later in verse 9, 'to condemn.'

Now of course, the Law doesn't actually 'kill' or 'bring death'. The Law is not poison...it's *Light*. It's God's revelation; it shines on men's lives and exposes what is there ...and what is lacking. It exposes sin—and it is that *sin* that kills.

But by exposing sin, the Law exposes guilt—and it condemns the sinner to the consequences of his or her guilt, which is death; "The wages of sin is death", (Rom 6:23). So that's, 'the Law of ministry.' It is a good ministry; it is a necessary ministry; Paul said that in Romans chapter 7, in verses 12 and 16, that, "The Law is good." He says that again in 1 Timothy chapter 1, verses 8 through 11: The Law is good, "when used lawfully". When it is used for the purpose it was given: To bring men to the knowledge of their sin and their helplessness; to show them their need. It was given to 'kill'—to bring people under the condemnation of death, to kill any idea of self-righteousness, and produce a sense of guilt, and misery, and longing for redemption. That's the function of the Law—that's the "lawfull" use of the Law.

The problem in Corinth was some were not using it lawfully. They taught that obeying the Law was, 'The means of gaining righteousness and God's acceptance.' So to correct that error, Paul contrasted the two ministries, (of the Law and the Gospel), and showed that the Law was both *insufficient* to produce righteousness, and it was *temporary*.

I think, maybe, if there's one word that summarizes Paul's lesson here, it's the word, *permanence*. The New Covenant is <u>permanent</u>. The Old Covenant and the Law, (and its ministry), was <u>temporary</u>. Paul found his proof for that in an unusual place—in the Law's glory, and the experience that Moses had with it. It "came with glory", Paul said, (vs7b), at Mount Sinai.

Moses describes it in Exodus chapters 19 and 20: How God came down on the mountain "in fire", and how the mountain "quaked" and 'smoked', and the people were 'terrified'. (ibid.). Then God called Moses up onto the mountain where He gave him the Ten Commandments engraved on tablets of stone. This was the "glory" with which the Law came. (vs7). Awesome glory.

But in spite of the awesome majesty of the moment—of the thunder and the lightning flashes that flashed and boomed on that mountain, and the fear of death that it caused in the people below...<u>still</u> the nation sinned.

Before the commandments were even given to the people, while Moses was still on the mountain receiving them, they fashioned an idol of gold in the form of a calf and they worshiped it—and had a *bacchanal*, (had an orgy). When Moses saw it, after coming down from the mountain, he threw the tablets down, shattering them at the foot of Mount Sinai. The Law, even with its glories and threats, could not prevent the people from sinning.

Moses returned to the mountain top and God gave a new set of tablets engraved with the commandments. Moses was with the LORD there for 40 days...and when he returned his face was shining. 'The glory of God' had illuminated the skin of his face, and

it was so radiant that we read in Exodus 34, (vs30), that the sons of Israel, "were afraid to come near him." There's glory there; but Paul tells us that they, "could not look intently at face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading *as* it was." (vs7c).

So again, the glory accompanying the Law is great. It's God's revelation, but it was 'a fading glory'. In fact the idea is, that as the people were looking at him the glory was already in the process of fading, and Paul found some lessons about the ministry of the Law from Moses's experience. *First*, the glory of it was an outward brightness; it caused his face to shine...but it was all *outward*. And so, the 'ministry of the Law' was like that—it is outward, not inward. It didn't make the people better. So first of all, Moses' experience signifies that the glory of the Law was an outward, outer glory and not something that affected change on the inner man.

Secondly, it faded, signifying that it was <u>temporary</u> glory; it was not permanent. It was a vanishing glory—vanishing away as the people there were looking at Moses' face; it was disappearing. The ministry of the Law was not intended to be a permanent ministry. "The ministry of death", (vs7a), was intended to be replaced by, 'the ministry of life'; by a New, (and better), Covenant.

Paul teaches this in Galatians chapters 3 and 4, that the Law was like a "tutor", like a *guide*, and like a *guardian*. It was given to 'fence in' the people of God—to restrict their lives and to prepare them for the coming of Christ and lead them to Him. Once He came, the function ended; the 'government of the *guardian*' stopped. That's what Paul indicates here: The 'ministry of the Law' was *temporary*—and the proof of that is, 'the glory was fading from the very beginning.'

And from that, Paul drew a conclusion in verse 8: 'If the Law had glory, (and it did, but a vanishing glory), how much more glory does the Spirit have?' Verse 8, "...how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?" The "ministry of the Spirit" is a <u>permanent</u> ministry. It's not transient; it doesn't pass away—and it is 'a ministry of life', not of death. He is the source of life; He gives it. The Law cannot do that. In fact, those who try to keep the Law, die. Paul testifies to that very thing in

Romans chapter 7, verse 10, 'the Law killed him'. He thought he was keeping it perfectly ...but he comes to that tenth commandment, 'Don't Covet', and it, 'stirred up coveting' within him and he said, "I died." (Rom 7:9).

Those who receive the Gospel, live. The Holy Spirit imparts life in the new birth, which produces faith that receives salvation. The 'ministry of life' is obviously more glorious than the 'ministry of death'. —So the Gospel has greater glory than the Law.

Paul confirms that in verse 9 where, for a second time, he describes the Gospel as, 'much more glorious'; only here he makes the contrast with different words; "For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory." (ibid.) Just as life is more glorious than death, righteousness is more glorious than condemnation.

The Law condemns, and does not exonerate. It's like a mirror that can show us that our hair is out of place—but it can't 'put it right'. It's good as far as it goes. —It exposes the problem, but it can't fix it. Now that's not bad; again, there is glory connected to that.

There is great benefit in a true and accurate diagnosis. We are blessed today with such things as X-ray machines, and MRIs. They can show us the problem with precision...a malignancy or a broken limb. But those machines can't remove the problem—or set a bone, (we need a skilled surgeon for that). And that's the relationship between the Law and the Spirit, (the Law and the Gospel). Condemnation comes through the Law. It is an accurate exposure of the truth, an accurate diagnosis of everyone's condition. It can do that—but it can't change things.

Righteousness comes through the Gospel, which is to say it comes though the power of the Holy Spirit. So, "the ministry of righteousness" is far greater and more glorious than "the ministry of condemnation." (vs9). That ministry, "the ministry of righteousness", is 'the ministry of acquittal'; that's the idea here. And that's clear from the contrast between the two words: *Condemnation* is a *verdict*—it's a kind of decision and pronouncement that a judge makes in a court of law. And "*righteousness*" in this

context is the opposite; so it has the idea of a verdict in this case, but in that case it is one of *exoneration*. It's the pronouncement of a judge of innocence, of 'Not guilty.' In fact, far more than that, it's the pronouncement of 'Righteousness'. So, 'Righteousness here is not our moral condition, but our <u>legal</u> status or, 'our legal standing with God.' It is <u>not</u> *infused* righteousness that changes our character, but *conferred* righteousness that changes our position before God.

Paul is speaking here, in other words, of *justification* as opposed to condemnation. That is a far greater ministry because it establishes us as innocent before God instead of guilty.

So how can that be? That's the natural question, if you reflect on that. How can that be?...because the reality is we're not innocent, we're not righteous—not in and of ourselves. We're guilty people. We were all born that way—born with sin, (in spite of Pelagius's heresy). We inherited Adam's guilt; we inherited his condition; we are sinners by nature; so how can we be acquitted in the face of the broken Law in which we are all guilty?

And that is where we see the power of grace and 'the glory of the ministry of righteousness' because it is a ministry that *provides* the righteousness that the Law required, (but that the Law cannot produce). Later, in chapter 5, verses 18 through 21, Paul explains how God can do that, when he said that God, "...reconciled us to Himself through Christ...", (vs18). He didn't, 'count our trespasses against us.' (vs19). Instead, "He made Him", (*He made Christ*), "who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (vs21).

In other words, 'God transferred our sin to a substitute, (His own Son), punished them, *(those sins)*, <u>in Him</u> on the cross—and now having satisfied the *just* demands of the Law, He, *(God)*, is able to forgive us.'

A great exchange occurred: Our sins were transferred to Christ, and at the moment of faith, His righteousness is imputed to us, (or 'transferred to us', or 'applied to us'), and at that moment, God justifies the believer.

It was all settled on the cross—but it's all applied in time, in every generation as God deals with His chosen ones, and as they believe...as they trust in Him.

Through faith we identify with Christ. Through faith we take hold of <u>Him</u>, as it were. We are united with Him, and in being united with Him through faith, and faith alone, we're clothed with His righteousness...and 'declared' to be that—to be **righteous**. That is **justification**.

Now based on justification, God does His work of sanctification. Having forgiven us and granted us the status of *'righteous'*, (of being fully and forever acceptable to Him), He then begins to transform our character into one of righteousness.

So, the grace that credits the believer with the righteousness of Christ, (or imputes righteousness), also imparts, *gives*, the fruit of that righteousness—which is a life of *righteousness*, a life of *holiness*, a life of *obedience* to the LORD. God does that through the work of the Holy Spirit, Who is also given in this New Covenant ministry.

The Law could never do that. As valuable as the Law is, it can only condemn. It cannot equip us, or transform us. It cannot impute the righteousness and salvation that only comes through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So as Paul says, "...much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory." (vs9b). In fact, as Paul explains in verse 10, the glory of the Gospel is so much greater than that of the Law that it completely surpasses it: "For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses *it*." (vs10). So it's not just a 'greater glory', (the glory of the Gospel, the glory of the New Covenant, the glory of the ministry of the Spirit), than the Law...it is *infinitely* greater. The ministry of the New Covenant and the Gospel is so much more glorious that the Old Covenant, (the Law), can no longer even be considered glorious...not in comparison with it.

As the old German theologian, Johann Albrecht Bengle said, "The greater Light obscures the lesser." It's like the glory of the moon and the stars compared to the glory of the sun. Venus, 'The Morning Star', (is actually a planet, but is called, 'The Morning

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Star'), has glory. If you're up early enough it's the last 'star', (the last planet), the last luminary in the sky: It's bright, it's beautiful, it stands out. But before long, it's gone; the light of the sun blocks it out. In fact, the radius of the sunrise is so much more spectacular that it makes you forget about the fading glory of the stars.

Well that is Christ in the Gospel. To borrow from Malachi chapter 4, verse 2, He, (*Christ*), is "the sun of righteousness", the s-u-n—"the *shemesh* of righteousness will rise with healing in *His* wings, *so that we* go forth and skip about like calves from the stall." (ibid.). The picture of these young cows, these little calves skipping around, jumping with great energy, that's us...by the grace of God. "The sun of righteousness", shown upon us. And that Light and life, that comes with Him, infuses that within us and changes us, fills us with energy and joy that we don't have in any other way.

When He came, (when Christ came), He fulfilled the Law and He brought the grace and the life that the Law and the Old Covenant could never give.—It's all found in Christ. So, the glory of the Gospel is greater than that the Law because it does infinitely greater things. It gives life that's eternal and righteousness in the place of death and condemnation. As Paul points out in verse 11, the Gospel is also greater because it lasts, it is permanent: "For if that which fades away *was* with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory."

The Gospel glory remains. In fact, as verse 8 explains, it only increases in us who receive it. And its permanence is a great comfort, because it means security for the believer. We have no security of that kind if we're basing our life on <u>our</u> obedience and <u>our</u> performance. We have it in Christ, and we have it because this Covenant and the work of the Lord is permanent.

The Gospel is the message of the New Covenant, which is an *eternal* covenant and promises *eternal life* to all who receive it. That is life that can never end and can never be taken away. That's glorious—and a blessing. So the blessings we have in Christ

are the blessings that remain: They're eternal; they are permanent—we have <u>everlasting</u> salvation.

That fact, and the comfort that it gives, is very important to the way that we live our lives; it's very practical. If we lack certainty of God's acceptance of us we cannot have joy in the Christian life. And if we lack joy, and we lack that sense of certainty, we will not make progress in the Christian life. I mean, a person can have this life and be a genuine believer, be in Christ…and have doubts. It doesn't mean they don't have salvation—but those doubts are frustrating. They cause us to stumble; they cause us to be static and not grow.

In his book, *Putting Amazing Back Into Grace*, Michael Horton quoted one of John Wesley's favorite writers, William Law, who wrote the less than comforting words: "We are to consider that God only knows what shortcomings in holiness He will accept; therefore we can have no security of our salvation but by doing our utmost to deserve it." (In other words, there are things He'll, *(God)*, accept about you that may be a failure on your part...but you can't know what they are. So, what you've got to do is, 'Do your utmost to deserve it'.) "We have", Law said, "nothing to rely on but the sincerity of our endeavors and God's mercy."

Well, God's mercy, for sure; that's what the ministry of righteousness is all about. But our *endeavors* can <u>never</u> give security because they are <u>always</u> faulty; they are always ineffective. And our sincerity is never pure. Nothing is pure that we do—for even when we are faithful about reading our Bibles and praying, we can get proud of what we've done; as well as how consistent we are in reading, and how much we know, or how 'righteous' we are, or our best efforts at prayer...

But it's never perfect! No one who really understands him or herself would say, 'What I do...I do perfectly!' No one does!

So if salvation and security are a mix of God's work and man's work, then it will all surely, certainly, fail. The weak link will always break—so there can be no confidence, or joy, in that kind of thinking.

But salvation is not the result of Divine <u>and</u> human *cooperation*. It is the result of Divine and human *responsibility*...<u>and</u> responding to it. But why do we respond? Why do we engage in our responsibility?

Because of God's mercy and God's grace, His sovereignty; it is <u>all</u>, and <u>only</u> of God. "Salvation is of the LORD." (Jon 2:9). That's how Jonah finished his great prayer in 'the belly of the great fish'...and it is a universal statement of truth: 'Salvation is of the LORD!' That is where our security lies; it lies in Him and Him alone—and in <u>His</u> grace and mercy alone.

*Justification* is the ground of our assurance. God provides the righteousness of it. He bought it for us through the death of His Son at Calvary; and He applies it to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Down through the ages, in every generation He applies the work of Christ and the salvation that our Lord accomplished—all that He accomplished at the cross, to His people in every generation. It's <u>His</u> work. And while we continue to be sinners, (and we will be until the day we die), we are saved in that condition. The reformers had a way of putting that, describing the believer, the child of God, the saint, as "simultaneously justified and sinful".

That's what Paul teaches in Romans chapter 4, verse 5. It is not the one who works, "...but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly", (ibid.), 'Who justifies the sinner', 'Who justifies the person who is estranged from Him, unreconciled, in rebellion.' 'He saves us in our ungodliness'; and what I mean by that is we are not first required to 'clean up our act', we are not required to, 'show moral progress and true sincerity...and real sincerity' before God will save us. He doesn't have these preconditions that we *must* meet in order to receive His mercy and grace. He saves us where He finds us...and through faith <u>alone</u>. At the moment of faith, the believer in Jesus Christ is **justified**. God pronounces us legally innocent before the Law—and <u>that</u> is firm ground to stand on. What justification means then is, 'We don't have to wait with uncertainty for a future verdict.'

To think that we will go through this life never really sure if we're saved, or if we're going to heaven or, 'we can hope for it, and we can strive for it'...and as some

would say, 'That is motivation to be more and more obedient' '...it doesn't do that; it's frustrating. So we don't spend our lives anxiously wondering if our efforts at 'law keeping' are enough for salvation. —They aren't.

The verdict has already been declared. We are fully accepted by God as His child, His son, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—and that <u>alone</u>. And it's not based on *our* works of righteousness, but on Christ's righteousness, which is given by God—imputed to us.

Now that righteousness is complete and perfect, so there's nothing more for us to do...but be thankful, rest in God's grace, and live as His child. And a true child of God will do that: Will live as a child of God and not interpret grace as a pretext to live a lazy, sinful life. Grace does the opposite: It galvanizes; it produces action; it produces a disciplined righteous life. So, He saves us where He finds us, but He doesn't leave us where He saved us.

"...The Spirit gives life." That's verse 6. That life is powerful; and the life is powerful; and where there's life there's the product of life. Where there's life there's the fruit of life—and with us that's love...all the fruit of the Spirit. It's a changed character, and that is brought out and produced in the believer, the one who's joined to Christ. We have His life in us, and fruit is inevitable for such an individual. He or she practices the principles of righteousness that are set forth throughout the New Testament, (and reflected and illustrated in the Law of Moses). Well that's the power and the glory of the New Covenant age, which Christ established through His death. It is 'the glory of grace.'

So when you look at a calendar or you write down a date, (and maybe the date April 15th, when that day comes around when you've got to pay your income tax to the government), don't despair; Rejoice! That date is a reminder that Christ has divided history; He ended the old age and He began a new one. And we live in that new age...and we live in the grace of God because of Him, 'and have glory to come.'

We'll see in the verses to come, that the glory is being experienced now: 'From glory to glory we're being transformed.' (2Cor 3:18). That's our present life now, as we live by the Spirit. But glory beyond that is coming and it's all the grace of God.

So do you know Him? Have you believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior? He is *Savior* because He died in the place of sinners. He bore the penalty in their place. All that a person must do, all that the Lord invites us to do, is believe in Him; trust in Him, lay hold of Him through faith—and in that way be saved.

You'll be forgiven at that moment. Your sins will be taken away, your guilt will be taken away, and you'll be given the righteousness of Christ, 'clothed in His righteousness.' And you will be forever accepted by God; made a child of God, a son of God, and heir of the world to come. What a glorious thing that is!

God help you to do that—and help all of us to live in light of that great truth.

*(Closing prayer)* Father, we do glory in our Redeemer—we look to Him, and Him alone. We look to the Triune God alone as the Savior. You sent Your Son to purchase sinners for Yourself. He came and He did that at great cost—His own life, in a brutal death, which was made particularly difficult with His separation from You.

But through it He gained salvation for us; He bought it for us. And in Your mercy, the Spirit of God comes and applies it to us.

We receive it through faith alone. Thank You for that. We could do it in no other way. It's all of You. We give You the praise, and thank You for it.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

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