



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Corinthians 5: 20-21

Spring 2025

"The Sweet Exchange"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We're finishing up 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 20 and 21; and I think our hymn we just sang really captures much of what we're going to consider this morning with that final stanza:

"When He shall come with trumpets sound,
O may I then in Him be found,
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before His throne."

(The Solid Rock by Wm Bradbury)

That's a great truth. Believers in Jesus Christ are "dressed in His righteousness", and that's really what Paul is speaking about in verses 20 and 21, of 2 Corinthians 5;

²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5: 20-21

Two simple verses, but very significant verses that we could spend a lot more time on this morning than we will be able to.

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless of time our study in it.
Let's pray.

Father, what a privilege to come together as Your people, to worship with one another, sing praises to You, sing of Your grace and Your mercy, and then to take a passage such as this and consider it. Brief as it is, we really don't have enough time to consider it thoroughly, but I pray that You'd guide us in our thinking and help us to understand the significance of what Christ did for us as our *representative* on the cross. —And what He achieved for us and what we have as a result of Your grace in sending Him and His mercy in dying for us.

We thank You for that great mercy; we thank You for that great sacrifice. We thank You for Your grace...and help us to appreciate it. May the Spirit of God teach us and build us up in the faith in this hour.

And Father, what a privilege it is to pray—to come before the throne of grace and ask for help in time of need. And it's always a time of need for us; we're never without the need of Your mercy and grace.

We live and we move and we exist in You. As Daniel told the wicked king Belshazzar, 'God gives us every breath of life that we take.' (Dan 5:23), You give us every moment of life we have; we exist, at this very moment, because it's Your will that we do —and we thank You for that and pray that this moment will be profitable to us...and glorifying to You. What a privilege, Father, to understand these things, to know these things and appreciate Your mercy and grace to us, so that we can say thank You for that.

And LORD, we sometimes lose sight of Your mercies to us and what we owe to You, because You bless us so consistently—You give us health and You give us the good things of life in abundance...and then they're taken away, (as they so often are), at the end of our journey through this world; and it's then that we have the opportunity to look to You and thank You for what You've given us.

And now we also consider, LORD, what's coming this week with Vacation Bible School and the youngsters that will be here, children whose whole life is ahead of them.

Father, may they hear the truth, and may the Spirit of God open their hearts to receive the truth, and may they come into Your family; may they trust in the Savior. Bless them.

Bless the teachers and the helpers...may it be another wonderful week, as it is so often every year. Bless them and bless that ministry.

Bless our time together as we continue in this service and as we sing hymns of praise to You.—And then we come to this great text of Scripture; bless us, guide us through it, and I pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) In John 15, verse 13, Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." That's the lesson of Charles Dickens' novel, *Tale of Two Cities*. It's about Sidney Carton, a brilliant lawyer who had lived a reckless life, but in the end sacrificed himself for his friend. The story moves between London and Paris during the French revolution when Charles Darnay, a French nobleman, (the husband and father of a family that Sidney Carton loved), was sentenced to death for the crime of being an aristocrat.

But Sidney had a plan. He entered the Bastille, got access to Charles' cell, drugged him, then traded clothes with him. Charles was carried out to freedom, while Sidney stayed and went to his death. As he mounts the scaffold to the guillotine, he says to himself, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." It's a beautiful story, a popular novel...but fiction.

What is not fiction is the sacrifice Christ made for His friends, when 'He traded clothes with us, put on our filthy rags, and died in our place'; "...*the* just for *the* unjust..." (1Pe 3:18). That's the lesson of the last two verses of 2 Corinthians 5, a chapter that gives the Good News of peace with God, the Good News of salvation—of God the Father, and in His Son, reconciling the world to Himself.

That *reconciliation*, (this 'peace with God'), is possible is only because of the *exchange* Christ made with sinners. And He has given us, He has given the church, the mission of making it known to the world. In fact, we have a 'title', a 'position' in this great mission that He has given us; and it's a noble title: In verse 20, Paul wrote that, "We are ambassadors for Christ."

Now, an ambassador speaks and acts on behalf of another, as the substitute for his or her government. And his or her responsibility is to faithfully proclaim the message given to that ambassador. Ambassadors don't speak in their own name, or act in their own authority...they speak only on the authority of the sovereign who appointed them; and give only the message that they received.

And that's what's required of us. We don't invent messages or give our own speculations with the authority of the Lord; we simply repeat the message of Christ, our sovereign, clearly and accurately. And the message is: "Be reconciled to God." (vs20b).

Now that doesn't mean, 'reconcile *yourself* 'to God; people cannot do that. They don't have the inclination to do that; they don't have the power to do that. Christ would not have come and died if we could reconcile ourselves. "Be reconciled to God", means 'Embrace the offer of reconciliation!' *God is reconciled*...man is not.

But Christ has obtained that for all who believe in Him...So, 'Believe and be reconciled! Receive the offer; do not reject God's love...Trust in Christ.' That is what we are to urge people to do.

And there is urgency about it. Paul says we are to 'Beseech people to believe!'... "...we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (vs20b). Paul was deeply invested in giving the Gospel. It's not a mechanical thing with him; it was a deeply important and emotional thing..."we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." You sense in that the urgency that Paul felt, the compassion he had for the lost..."we beg you on behalf of Christ!" (ibid.) He cared deeply for them—as God does.

Isaiah pictures Him, pictures the LORD with this same sense of urgency and compassion in Isaiah chapter 65, verse 2, where he says, "I have spread out My hands all

day long to a rebellious people..." . There, the LORD is seen as opening His hands wide and inviting them to come—but they rebel; and they will not. So, 'Quit the rebellion!' is the message. 'Lay down your arms and accept the terms of surrender that are offered...be reconciled to Him!' —That's our message.

And as we give that, we should think of the terms of surrender that men offer their enemies in order to give them peace. Sometimes they are crushing burdens, vendettas, like the terms of the armistice that were placed upon Germany after the First World War, (that, really, set the stage for the Second World War).

Or the terms the Ammonites gave the men of Jabesh-gilead in 1 Samuel 11, (vs9), 'For the city to be spared, each man had to gouge out his right eye and become a slave of the Ammonites.' In other words, men pay a high price for peace; they make their enemies pay a high price in order to have a kind of 'reconciliation' or 'peace'.

But what are God's terms? They're very simple: 'Submit to Me. Believe in My Son, and I will make you sons of God. I'll forgive your iniquities. I'll give you eternal life and make you heirs of the glory to come.'

Not harsh terms; gracious terms, particularly for rebels who crucified His Son. But that's the character of God, that's the character and the nature of His grace.

But how is that? How can He do that? What is the basis for this gracious offer of peace? How is it that we can urge men to be reconciled to God? Is it, 'Well, God is good, God is love; He pardons everyone!' ...That's the message of many today. I think that's probably the popular message of this modern age. Liberal theologians reject the idea of 'a blood atonement'... they point to the parable of the Prodigal Son and say, 'The father didn't require a sacrifice to forgive his son...he *received* him. Well, neither does God require that of sinners...He simply forgives.' A famous quote by the German poet, Heinrich Heine, who did not live a very good life and said on his deathbed, "God will forgive me. That is His business."

No! Not at all. Paul gives the basis for reconciliation in verse 21; and very simply it is stated in the word, *exchange*; 'our sins were *exchanged* for Christ's righteousness.' Paul says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin at our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (vs21).

Philip Hughes in his commentary on 2 Corinthians wrote, "There is no sentence more profound in the whole of Scripture. It tells us what God has done for the salvation of men and women, for the salvation of sinners, for the salvation of the unworthy."

And so this is also part of the message we must give as Christ's ambassadors. You cannot be an ambassador of Jesus Christ, or the Lord God, or of the Triune God, you cannot be an ambassador of Him and preach God's Word, and not teach this: 'Christ is our sacrifice!'

Now, a sacrifice as a *substitute*: It takes the place of the sinner so that the judgment, (that the offender deserves), falls instead on the victim. In ancient Israel it was on the lamb, or the bull, or the goat. You see this very clearly in the great, "day of atonement", (Yom Kippur), described in Leviticus chapter 16, when the high priest offered a sacrifice for the nation. A goat was slaughtered on the altar and the blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat as a payment for the nation's sins and satisfaction for God's judgment...in His justice. He satisfied His justice through a sacrifice—that's what's necessary. Paul tells us in Romans 6, verse 23, "The wages of sin is death..."; so to satisfy God's justice, there must be death.

And then a second goat, (the *scapegoat*), was offered. The priest would place his hands on the head of that goat; he would confess the sins of the nation, (the sins of Israel), signifying that the nation's sins had been transferred from the nation to the goat. And then that goat, as a *substitute*, was driven out into the wilderness—signifying that the sins of the people, (that had been paid for through the sacrifice of that first goat), had been taken away...removed. All of that was a picture of what the ultimate and final sacrifice, (Christ's death), would be and would do—and showed the necessity of such a sacrifice.

God cannot be dismissive of sin; He cannot simply say, 'Forgive and forget', as though it doesn't matter. No, that's not a holy God. God is holy, He is just, and He must first deal with sin. He cannot compromise His holiness; He must first cleanse us from the guilt and sin in order to forgive us.

All of Israel's sacrifices and ceremonies were designed to teach that. They were a 'type', which is to say they were a *picture* and a *prophecy* of who Christ is and what He would do. But none of those sacrifices were adequate in and of themselves. The blood of bulls, and goats, and lambs are not sufficient to remove the sin of human beings.

And so God supplied the only adequate sacrifice, His own Son. And He is described here as being One, "...who knew no sin...", (vs21a)—He had no personal relationship with sin. The Son of God became a man in order to be our *representative*, our *substitute*...and He was qualified to do that because He was sinless.

Now He knew about sin of course; its origin, nature, and consequence. So "...knew no sin...", doesn't mean He wasn't aware of it, that He didn't understand it. Of course He understood it; better than anyone does—but He never experienced that sin...He never committed sin personally—in thought or deed. He was untainted by sin. He met the Old Testament qualification of being *pure*, 'a lamb without blemish', which was essential.

Only a sinless man could be a substitute for people, men and women, otherwise the substitute would need a sacrifice. But Christ was sinless; He could take the place of the sinners. And Paul tells us He did; God, "made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf...", (vs21a), meaning, 'in our place as our *substitute*', He *represented* us in judgment.

The idea of *representation* and *substitution* go together: A substitute is a representative. And the idea of *representation* is taught throughout the Old Testament in numerous ways. It is filled with examples of *representative people*, or *representative offices*. The idea of *representation* is taught, for example, (as we've already seen), in the

'sacrificial lamb' that took the place of the sinner. The *high priest* was the *representative of the nation*. He bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders and on his breastplate. The *prophet* was the *representative of God*, who spoke to the people. The priests brought the people before God and prayed for the nation. He was their *representative* to God. The prophet was God's *representative* to the nation with His revelation. So this is all throughout the Scriptures; from the sacrifices to the various *offices* that were occupied.

One of the most memorable examples, in my mind at least, of *representation* and *substitution* is that of David, when he fought Goliath. Both men *represented* their nations. Goliath was 'the champion of the Philistines', and they had full confidence in him. David was 'the champion of Israel', though at the moment they didn't realize that. I'm sure most of those men standing on the hillside overlooking the valley of Elah were trembling with fear as this young shepherd boy, who is not skilled in warfare, goes out to meet Goliath, who was trained as, "a warrior from his youth", (1Sa 17:33, as Saul told David). But what they were about to witness was how strength is demonstrated in weakness, and how David slew the great giant.

Well, it was as though the nations were inside each of these men, the nation of Philistia in Goliath, and the nation Israel in David. And they went out on the field of battle in place of their nations and *represented* their nation; so what happened to them happened to those who the *representative* stood for and replaced.

Just as we send a *representative* to Congress to speak and to vote in our place, (we can't all go there and do that), so we have one man, (or one woman), go from our district and represent us. Their actions are considered our actions...and so it was when David and Goliath met. Their actions were the actions of their respective nations.

David's victory was Israel's victory. Goliath's defeat was the Philistines defeat. And the Philistines understood that fully and completely. What did they do when the giant fell? Well, they didn't buckle on their armor and draw out their swords and go into

the valley to engage the Israelites. They said, 'It's over', and they fled...because they understood they had lost the battle because their *representative* lost.

And that is what happened when Christ went to the cross. He went there as our *representative*...His *elect* were in Him, and are in Him. And He stood for us; He took our place—and God made Him, "to be sin on our behalf..." (vs21b).

Now it's important to notice that Paul did not say, 'God made Him who knew no sin to be a sinner'. It's a difficult statement for many people. They read over that and they're puzzled about, 'How did God, 'make Him sin' on our behalf?!'

Well, He didn't, 'make Him a sinner'; Christ remained sinless as a sacrifice in our place. Paul means, 'God *treated* Him as a sinner.' He *imputed* our sins to Him. He 'put our sins to His account'. He, 'made Him the object of God's wrath in our place, as the sin *bearer*.' This is what Paul wrote in Galatians chapter 3, verse 13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us...". In both, (2Cor 5:21 & Gal 3:13), the idea is, 'He bore *the punishment* of our sins.' *Substitution* has the idea of '*transference*', or '*exchange*'. —Our sins were *transferred* to Him so that He could die in our place.

That's what Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 53, verses 5 and 6. He foretold, that that would occur where it is said that, "...the LORD caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." (Isa 53:6). As the Israelite read that, he would have, (if he had the instruction of the Spirit of God), he would have seen in that the image of the priest putting his hands on the scapegoat, (transferring the sins of the nation, as it were), to that *substitute* who, 'bore them away.' Our sins were *transferred* to Him, so that His righteousness could be transferred to us, "...so that we might become...", Paul says, "...the righteousness of God in Him." (vs21b).

Martin Luther called this, "...a wonderful exchange, our sins are no longer ours but Christ's; and the righteousness of Christ is not Christ's but ours." That's a good description of what happened: 'A wonderful exchange, our sins were *exchanged* for Christ's righteousness.'

Now, "righteousness" here doesn't mean inward righteousness. This is not 'infused righteousness', 'personal righteousness', 'imparted righteousness'...it's 'imputed righteousness'.

Paul didn't say Christ was *made* sinful...He was "made...sin", (vs21a); and he doesn't say that we were *made* righteous, (as 'made morally excellent'), but we *have* righteousness. That's important to understand...Christ's righteousness was imputed to us. His righteousness was, as it were, 'assigned' to us, just as our sin was imputed, or *assigned* to Him. An *exchange* occurred which resulted in our **justification**. We will not become righteous, we will not be made perfect until we are in heaven—and until the resurrection when it will be fuller and complete. But in the meantime we are completely acceptable to God, and accepted by God, because that is our legal standing before Him. That's how God sees us. —It's as though we are standing in Christ; 'clothed with Him'. (Gal 3:27). And He accepts us as being just like Christ...righteous like Christ.

So, just as David's victory was counted as Israel's victory, (even though the people didn't fight), so too, Christ's punishment and perfection are counted as ours, because He is our *representative*. He took our sins at the cross, and we receive His righteousness at the moment of faith. It's not our righteousness, it's His righteousness. It's, "an alien righteousness", as the reformers used to say.

That is 'The Doctrine of Justification' —a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith. Calvin called it, "The main hinge on which religion turns." Martin Luther said it 'Determines whether the church is standing or falling.' Whether we are preaching it or not, whether we're believing it or not...if we're believing it and preaching it, the church is standing and standing strong.—and if it's not, it's falling. It is that important!!

The doctrine is: 'We are forgiven all our sins; the slate is wiped clean. All the charges against us have been wiped away, because they've been satisfied in the sacrifice of Christ. And now, instead of those sins being charged against us, we have the righteousness of Christ.' —That's the declaration.

And all that occurs at the *moment* of faith. Justification is not a process, (there are some within Christendom that would argue that, and say that). I heard a young lady on a podcast one time talking about this and how, 'she believes in justification'...and that 'she is being justified every day', and, 'she must earn that justification every day', and she hopes that, at the end of it all, she'll be accepted into heaven.'

That is **not** justification. That's not justification as it's presented in the Word of God. It's not a *process*, it's an **event**. —That's the Gospel...that's our message! It answers the question that Job asked, 'How can a man be just before God?' (Job 4:17). Only by means of Christ, our substitute, and "The wonderful exchange."

That's what Paul is teaching here in our text of 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21. It's the same way that, 'God made Christ to be sin for us', God also caused us to be the "righteousness of God in Him." (v21b). It's sometimes said Paul's language is taken from bookkeeping or accounting—the idea of 'imputing' is being used to describe how God deals with us in justification. (I think that can be a little abstract.)

We have an example of imputation in the Book of Philemon, (which was written on behalf of a runaway slave named Onesimus). He had left his master, Philemon, and he'd run away. He'd evidently stole money from him and made his way to Rome where he hoped to lose himself in that large city...and never be found again. But somehow, providentially, Onesimus found Paul, who was imprisoned there in the capital, and he was converted through Paul's ministry.

Providentially, Paul knew Philemon well...calls him, his "brother"...calls Philemon a "fellow worker". (Phl 1:1). Philemon also seems to have been converted through the preaching of the apostle, so Paul wrote to him on behalf of Onesimus, and sent the slave back with a letter in which he calls Onesimus, "my child", (Phl 1:10), and asks Philemon "to accept him as you would me." (Phl 1:17). And here, there's a sense of *substitution* and *representation*: 'When you see him, see me, Philemon, that's how you're to understand this young man that's come back. He's a different man. See me in seeing him.'

And then he wrote, "But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;" (Phm 1:18), or, '*impute* that to me.' In other words Onesimus' debts were to be credited to Paul... 'put to his account.'

Now Paul doesn't say, 'And put my solvency to the account of Onesimus', (but that's certainly the idea). Paul wanted Philemon to no longer look upon his slave as a thief, but as a brother...as the apostle himself—or, 'accept him as you would me.' So the idea is, 'Impute Onesimus to me, and impute me to Onesimus.'

That's what God has done for us; He has imputed our sins *to* Christ, put our debts *to* His account, (Who has paid for them all through His death), and He, (*God*), has put Christ's solvency, (His righteousness), *to* our account. On that basis alone, (alone!), God accepts us into His family as His son, as being just like Christ, with, 'a righteousness surpassing that of the scribes and the Pharisees'; (to borrow from our Lord's statement in Matthew 5, verse 20.) You must be perfect...and that's what we have in Christ—perfection before God.

Zechariah gives us a picture of this '*transfer*', of '*exchange*', in chapter 3 of his prophecy with Joshua, the high priest. And the scene, (Zech 3:3), is that of Joshua the high priest standing before the LORD, 'clothed in filthy garments', (just like all of us are naturally). We don't think of ourselves that way—but Isaiah certainly did and exposed our condition when he said, "...all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..." (Isa 64:6), ...and it's the best that we can do. We think we've dressed ourself up in 'good behavior' and 'good motives' ...and all of that! And then we display ourselves as a good example of 'civility', and...whatever!...'morality'! And what the Spirit of God says through the prophet Isaiah, is, 'those are filthy garments!'

And so it was with the high priest. And Satan was standing there accusing Joshua: 'He's a sinner. He's unworthy. Look at him, clothed in filthy garments; he's guilty!' And he was; that was true; and there was no argument or defense to be made. Joshua doesn't say anything...he's there, and he must have said, 'He's absolutely right.'

But God told Satan to 'be quiet'. Then He said, This man is, "a brand plucked from the fire." (Zech 3:3). In other words, 'he's a sinner, saved by grace.' And then He ordered

an angel to remove the filthy garments from him, and put clean clothes on him from head to foot. "See...", He said, "...I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes." (*'clothe you with righteousness'*). (Zech 3:4b).

Now that is what God has done for us:

He's removed our sins;

He's removed our guilt;

He has covered us with the righteousness of Christ.

We have God's pardon;

We have God's perfection.

He has given us a righteous standing with Him.

He has pronounced us legally, 'right with the Law'.

That's *Justification*!

Again, it is not 'infused righteousness'. Justification is not about having our character 'transformed', 'being made better', 'becoming acceptable by doing good works', or 'becoming acceptable by taking the sacraments'. God does not pour His grace into us through baptism, or through the Mass, or through any ceremonies of any kind. It's not by faith **plus** some physical, material matter, (like water), or the addition of *effort* on our part...the 'good deeds' that we might try to pile up.

The idea that justification, salvation, is a '*process*', again, can only produce doubt and despair...with no sense of salvation in it. There can be no assurance of salvation if it is our 'work', or if we have to wait until the end for the final verdict—because that verdict would be terrible if that's what we're doing.

Justification's not like that. It is legal, not moral. It's not about a sick person gradually being made well—but a criminal being pardoned. And not only pardoned—but declared righteous...innocent, and righteous. It's not a *process*...it's **instantaneous**. God accepts us at the *moment* of faith. We don't have to wait for the verdict; we get the

verdict when we believe...and at that *moment* we are righteous with the righteousness of Christ.

And that is permanent. Paul says, "...we...become the righteousness of God in Him." (vs21b). That is in the present tense...meaning *justification* is continuous; we are *always* righteous. That is a theology of *certainty*—not doubt. And it is liberating truth; we don't need to be anxious about the future.—We know the future!

Now that's not a license to sin. Salvation involves both *imputed* and *imparted* righteousness. Justification and sanctification go together—they cannot be separated. But they are distinct from one another. —Justification is the root and foundation of sanctification...and that cannot change our character until He first changes our standing, our legal status with Him. And those He justified He will certainly, certainly, sanctify.

Justification is by faith alone, but not a faith that is alone. The 'Justified' are born again; they have new life; they are placed in Christ, (whose life is in us as a result)—and they will show signs of life. That is both necessary and inevitable; but those 'signs', those 'works' are all of grace and sanctification.

And those works don't make us more acceptable to Him. We are fully and forever accepted by God at the *moment* of faith; so we don't have to be striving for divine acceptance. We don't have to be, 'working our way up the ladder', so to speak. We are at the top of the ladder from the beginning, and we are fully accepted by God. And we will strive to please Him to obtain and produce that imparted righteousness, out of love for Him, out of gratitude for His goodness and grace to us.

When John Bunyan realized that, 'Christ is his righteousness,' his life changed. This happened while he was walking through a field; and he said, "This sentence fell upon my soul: 'Thy righteousness is in heaven.'" —And he realized; 'It is all in Christ!' God's relationship with him is not determined by the things that he does, and how he feels one day as opposed to another...but by Christ who never changes. He wrote,

"Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed; I was loosed from my afflictions and irons.
Now went I home rejoicing for the grace and love of God."

That's why Christ came. That's the reason He became a man—to take our sins upon Himself, punish them in His sacrificial death, (the Father punished them in His death), so that we, through faith alone, in Him alone, could take His righteousness on ourselves.

Luther called this "A wonderful exchange!" A second century church father called it, "The sweet exchange." It was in a letter that he wrote to a Jewish man explaining when Christ came, and why He came, and what He did when He came...and then this word of praise:

"O sweet exchange,
O inscrutable creation,
O the unexpected benefits that the wickedness of many
should be concealed in the One, righteous man;
and the righteousness of the One
should make righteous many wicked."

And we Christians have the glorious mission of taking that message to the world: The message of hope to a world that is cursed and under the sentence of death, (and rightly so). It is a great privilege...and an impossible responsibility.

But we're not alone. As ambassadors we've been sent by the Lord who is with us at every moment, and there to enable us to do this, this great work in His grace and in His power.

If you've not experienced that *sweet exchange*, look to Christ. Trust in Him; He came to offer up His life as a sacrifice for sinners. And all who believe in Him are forgiven and received by the Father, just as that prodigal was received by his father, who replaced his son's rags with the best robe, and a celebration.

So come to Christ. —Trust in Him. “We beg you...”, exchange your sin and guilt for Christ's robe of righteousness. Be received into the family of God, and have eternal life. That's grace; that's sovereign grace.

(Closing prayer) What a privilege it is to be able to call you Father—“Abba Father”, (Rom 8:15), in the most intimate, personal terms. It's all because of Your grace in sending Your Son, whose death *propitiated* You, (satisfied Your justice), and we are *reconciled* by coming to You through Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That's Your work of *reconciliation*—bringing us together in peace.

And we thank You, Father, that we who have received that grace can call You, “Father”, and know with confidence that You are with us always, and forever, supplying our every need.

We thank You for that, thank You for the righteousness we've received from You in justification, and the righteousness that You're producing in us through the Spirit of God in our lives at every moment.

We thank You for grace, and we thank You for the sacrifice of Your Son. And it's in Christ's name we pray.

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. Amen.

(End of Audio)