

# Holy And Without Blame

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**That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27).**

To come to a clearer manifestation of the gospel observe what the apostle says in Ephesians 5:25. Christ ‘purges and sanctifies his church, that He might present it to Himself, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and without blame’.

The words run in the present tense; not that in glory only we shall be without spot, but now, even now, we shall be without blemish, we shall be without spot and wrinkle; and that He might now present us to Himself. Thus, in 2 Corinthians 5:21, you shall see the truth spoken more emphatically, the apostle runs in a mighty strain in this business; ‘He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him’. Both terms are expressed in the abstract; he was made sin for us; here you see plainly, our sins are to be translated to Christ, that God reckons Christ the very sinner; nay, God reckons all our sins to be His, and makes Him to be sin for us; and what is the fruit of this? We are thereby made the righteousness of God in Him. If we be righteousness, where is our sinfulness to be charged upon us? He tells us expressly, in 1 John 1:7, ‘That the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin’, the blood of Christ cleanses us: He does not say the blood of Christ shall cleanse us from all sin; but He says, for the present time, the blood of Christ does cleanse us from all sin. John the Baptist has this expression, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world’. He takes them away. How does He take them away, and yet leave them behind, and yet charge them upon the person that believes? The person must be discharged, or else how can they be taken away? This is the main thing signified in that notable sacrifice of the scapegoat, (Leviticus 16:21). The high priest must lay his hand upon the head of the goat to be carried away into the wilderness. The text says, ‘It was the laying the sins of the people, and that when they were laid upon him, he goes into the wilderness’. If the scapegoat goes into the wilderness, and leaves their sins behind him; then the end of this service would be frustrated; for he was to carry them away upon him; so Christ, as the scapegoat, has our sins laid upon His back, and He carries them away; and, therefore, in Psalm 103:22, it is said, ‘that God removes our sins from us, as far as the east is from the west; he casts our sins into the bottom of the sea’. Besides all these texts of scripture, I might produce multitudes more, if need were for this purpose; but, I think, there can be nothing in the world

more clear than this truth, that Christ is such a way to a poor believing soul that He has received, that He might take and carry away all the sins of such a person; that he is no longer reckoned as having sins upon him.

Some will object, do not those that receive Christ actually commit sin? - I answer, yes, he does commit sin, and the truth is, they can do nothing but commit sin. If a person that is a believer has anything in the world, he has received this, that if he does anything that is good it is the Spirit of God that does it, not he: therefore, he himself does nothing but sin; his soul is a mint of sin. But then, you will say, if he does sin, must not God charge it where it is? Must not he be reckoned to be a sinner, while he does sin? I answer, no; though he does sin, yet he is not to be reckoned a sinner, but his sins are reckoned to be taken away from him. A man borrows £100; some man will say, does he not owe this £100, seeing he borrowed it? I say, no, not if another has paid the £100 for him. A man does sin against God, God reckons not his sin to be his, he reckons it to be Christ's; therefore he cannot reckon it his. If the Lord did lay the iniquity of men upon Christ (as I said before), then how can He lay it upon their persons? You have sinned, Christ takes it off; assuming, I say, you have received Christ. And as God does reckon sin to Christ, and charges sin upon Him, so, if you be of the same mind with God, you must also reckon this sin of thine upon Christ; His back has borne it, He has carried it away.

For my part, I cannot see what every person will object; I will endeavour to make this truth clear as the day to you. Do but consider with yourselves what Christ came into the world for if not to take away the sins of the world? He need never to have died, but to take away the sins of the world. Did He come to take them away, and did He leave them behind Him? Then He lost His labour. Did He not leave them behind Him? Then his person is discharged of them from whom He has taken them; but if the person be not discharged of them, he is not a justified person in himself; neither can you account his person justified as long as you account his sin upon him. It is a contradiction to say, that a man is innocent, yet guilty. Beloved, then here is a point of strange ravishing usefulness to souls that can but draw towards it and receive it. All the difficulty lies, whether it be my portion or thy portion; Whether I may say, Christ is my way, thus from this guilt, that there can be none of this charged upon me. I say, if you receive Christ, if you but set footing into this way, Christ; as soon as ever you are stepped into this way, you are stepped out of the condition you were in. Men's receiving of Christ! What is that? You will say to receive Him, is to come to Him; 'He that comes to me I will in no wise cast off'. Mark; many think there is such a kind of sinfulness that is a bar to them; that though they would have Christ, yet there is not a way open for them to take Him. Beloved, there is no way of sinfulness to bar thee from coming to Christ; If thou hast a heart to come to Him, and, against all objections to venture thyself with joy into the bosom of Christ, for the discharge of all thy

sinfulness; Christ Himself (which I trembled to express, though it be with indignation) He should be a liar, if though comest to Him, and He casts thee off. 'Everyone that will', says He, 'let him come and drink of the water of life freely'. You shall find, beloved, the great complaint of Christ, thus, 'he came to his own, and his own received him not': and to the scribes and Pharisees, 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life'. The truth is, men dote upon the establishing of a righteousness of their own to bring them to Christ; and it is but presumptuous, or licentious doctrine, that Christ may be their Christ, and they receive Him, and he considered simply ungodly, as enemies; but they are abominably injurious to the faith of Jesus Christ, to the exceeding bounty of that grace of His, who saves from sin, without respect of anything in the creature, that He Himself might have the praise of the glory of His grace. The covenant, concerning the blotting out of transgressions, is a free covenant, 'not for thy sake do I this, be it known unto thee', saith the Lord, 'for thou art a stubborn and stiff-necked people; but for my own sake do I this'. All this grace to acquit thy soul, here and hereafter, comes out of the love of God Himself; and He has no other motive in the world, but simply, and only, His own love, that put Him up on the deliverance of a poor wretch from iniquity and discharge of sin, from that load which otherwise would grind and crush him to powder; I say, His own love is the motive. God neither looks to anything in the creature to win Him to show kindness, nor yet anything in the creature to debar him; neither righteousness in men that persuades God to pardon sin; nor unrighteousness in men that hinders Him from giving this pardon, and acquitting them from their transgressions; it is only and simply for His own sake He does it unto men.

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