

There is no neutrality with God. There is no sound man, save for Jesus. All have gone astray to serve themselves and ended up with the great spiritual virus of corruption, that hereditary marker of Adam's offspring, which presents a mysterious, systemic, and progressive attack on our spiritual immune system that eventually breaks it down, opening the way to opportunistic depravity making life more and more miserable as they compound one upon the other. Take conceit, for example, making rivals through envy, which destroys both. Mockery, that common parlance of supposedly free speech, is a great shredder of human dignity, despoiling its victim with devastating laughter as it lays bare the vulnerable soul, cleaving righteousness into sorrow and shame. This corruption of God's creation, this pillaging of righteousness, the way things are supposed to be, and its corresponding guilt before God, are not neutrality. They are treachery. Violent, mocking, brutal treachery against God and against the creation which He made, loves, and rules. We are not what we are supposed to be, righteous, and all of humanity is enslaved to unrighteousness, destroying marauders of God's handiwork, with nothing to rescue us from our guilt before the Creator or from our corruption which perverts all that humanity touches. What shall we do to restore integrity? Where shall we find the rightness, the wholeness, the peace with God and creation, the hope which echoes through the turmoil: Can this doom be righted?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's great graffiti scribed across history: "I have done it!" God has made a way to cure the disintegration of our corruption and pallid death through the atoning death of His perfect Son in our place. And then, having accomplished *our righteousness* for us, and crediting to all who would humbly entrust themselves to Him, He raised Him from the dead, proving that wholeness was secured and ruin reversed.

## 1. Jesus Was Delivered Up to God's Wrath Because of Our Sins

### a. Handed Over

#### i. By God – for redemption and justice

##### 1. Acts 2:22-24

a. God was purchasing humanity by expending the life of His Son

b. Humanity was purchasing sin by expending the life of God's Son (v23)

#### ii. This means that Jesus' death was not an accident, or a surprise, or a test of humanity's integrity

1. No, God already knew that sin had brought onto humanity the curse of death, BY GOD, and that God already knew humanity's hearts were bent towards evil, the multiplying power of all sin to spoil a good creation

2. Humanity was already disintegrated, without integrity, and God was moving in power reconcile us to wholeness with Him, one another, and Creation

#### iii. By Man – for power and *theocide*

1. The same act was worked by God and by Man, but for very different reasons (Psalm 2 – "let us cast of their chains!")

2. Since Jesus didn't fit what we considered a good king to be, then we became enraged
    - a. Acts 2:23,36; 4:10; 5:30 – “whom *you* crucified!”
    - b. When Jesus didn't fight in the way that we deem to be good, then we hated him
- b. Because of Our Transgressions
- i. Our transgression brought ruin (death)
    1. Note that the Bible doesn't say that Jesus was handed over because of our *death*.
      - a. Ruin is only the symptom, the result, not the cause of all our woes and problems.
    2. Sin is the cause of our death in every form, every woe, every grief, every travail, and every sorrow.
    3. For death to be undone, sin must be undone, and the Cross of Jesus Christ was God, through our representative, our Champion, our Christ, paying down the cursed root of sin by bearing the wrath of God due to us.
  - ii. He was handed over by God *for us*
    1. It is clear that the reason for which Jesus was delivered over by God's foreordained plan was to deal with our sin
      - a. James 1:15 – lust gives birth to sin which when accomplished *produces death*
      - b. 1 Pet 3:18 – “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,”
    2. Our sins called to God for justice, just as injustice today brings forth the strong desire for thing to be made right
  - iii. God's curse of death and ruin could only be undone by undoing its cause: sin
    1. Therefore, Jesus is God's procurement of life by killing death at its root of sin, that rebellious usurping of God's authority
    2. Sin has brought us into conflict with God, for He is just and is wrathful against sin.
    3. Our sin (injustice toward God) has created enmity (an obstacle) between us and God
  - iv. Our natural hostility to God reveals this enmity in the very moment when God tells us how hostile that we really are:
    1. We hate anything that threatens our self-sovereignty.
      - a. We want to be our own masters and lords, and the absolute claims of God are utterly *repugnant* to our hearts
      - b. When God tells us that we are crooked deep down, desperately wicked, sinners at the very root, we respond with animosity, not neutrality
        - i. Romans 8:7 – the natural man is hostile towards God
    2. One way to deal with our hostility is to concoct a view of a God who is remote and impersonal (a divine “life-force”), or similarly a very compliant, loving God who accepts everyone and everything.
      - a. That God-picture will not inspire us or comfort us much, but it will also not *directly* trigger our natural spiritual enmity. We may

feel very cordial and warm toward a God who makes few demands on us.

3. Another way to deal with our hostility is to concoct a false view of God who is very strict and legally demanding, but as long as we feel we can meet his demands and put him in a position of having to bless us, then we may also feel cordial to him.
  - a. This is a much more “unstable” view of God to have, however, because if this “God” has been supposedly given the good and moral life he demands, and if then he does not answer all our most heart-felt prayers, we may become enormously angry with him.
  - b. Nevertheless, a demanding, moralistic “God” is also a non-threatening God, in the long run. He can be “bought off” with a good life. So neither the “relativist” nor the “moralist” have a God that triggers and reveals the natural spiritual hostility of the human heart toward the Lord.
4. But the God of the Bible is not only totally holy, but totally gracious. Not only does he demand we submit to his will, but he tells us we are incapable of it and will have to rely completely on his grace.
  - a. In other words, there is no way to confront the true God and retain a scrap or shred of self-sovereignty. We have no rights before a God like that.
  - b. He is so wonderful to us, and he has done so much for us, that there is nothing he cannot ask of us. And that is what the natural, unredeemed human heart simply cannot stand. We cannot stand anything that threatens our self-sovereignty. We want to be our own masters and our own lords.
  - c. It is the true God of the gospel of Jesus Christ which is the most “untamable” and “threatening” God of all. And, ironically, it is this utter grace and utter holiness of this God which proves the very repugnance we fight to claim doesn’t exist.

- c. In the gospel of Jesus the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, reveals our inability and absolute dependence, and then takes us to Jesus, where we see true and abiding hope of being made whole.

## 2. Jesus Was Raised Up Because God Was Satisfied With His Righteousness Reckoned to Us

### a. Raised up

#### i. By whom?

1. God! (v24)

#### ii. The same one who delivered Jesus over to death for our sins also raised Him up from the dead for our justification

1. This work, from beginning to end, is done by God, achieved by the sovereign grace of God

2. It takes a resurrection! A life brought back from the darkest finality!

3. Do you see how hopeful this is to a heart which knows its animosity and longs for reconciliation? Death cannot hold back the hope!

- b. Because of Our justification
  - i. Righteousness - the way things are supposed to be, the undoing of ruin and the restoration of right
  - ii. This justification is the elimination of contention between us and God
  - iii. This justification is imputed, credited by faith (4:22;5:1).
    - 1. That is, it is “reckoned or calculated” as righteousness
      - a. Jesus cried out “paid in full!” from the Cross (John 19:30)
    - 2. This is important, because it is not as though God has eliminated the presence of our sin by faith, but he has eliminated our contention with Him by faith
    - 3. He will later remove the presence of our sin, when Jesus returns and makes all things new (Rev 21:5; 1 John 3:1-3)
- c. His resurrection *proves* that we, who have faith in Him, *have satisfied the curse of death which sin imputed, and now have the righteousness of God imputed to us* because of His God-satisfying death in our place.
  - i. Thus, the defeat of death by His being raised up shows that the cause of death, sin, has been dealt with. Death's taproot was poisoned by the blood of Christ.
  - ii. Therefore, we who are united to Him by faith are freed not only from death, but from sin which is deep down – enmity evaded and renovated!
- d. In fact, it is so strongly connected that Paul says the resurrection of Jesus is *because of* (same preposition as that used to relate His death to our sins) our justification
  - i. This means that Jesus was raised because His work had accomplished our righteousness before God
  - ii. Therefore, since He has been raised, we KNOW that our salvation belongs to the Lord and is secure
  - iii. This makes the death and resurrection of Jesus not only intellectually coherent with the reality of our corruption, but existentially satisfying as the longing of our deepest desires for rest, healing, and wholeness: peace.

### 3. We Have Peace With God Through the Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus

- a. Therefore
  - i. That is, because of the death and resurrection of Jesus our rightness is achieved for us and imputed to us, credited, applied by God’s very own Spirit!
  - ii. This is incredibly good news which is proven to be true because Jesus was raised from the dead – the evidence that God, the righteous judge, was satisfied with His payment for our sins and our peace with God is secured by Him!
- b. Having been justified by faith
  - i. Our justification is rooted in the death/resurrection of Jesus
    - 1. It is the historical event which grounds our salvation
    - 2. If Jesus was raised, then we who are united to Him in dependence (faith), were justified when He was raised
    - 3. Our justification was completed at that moment
  - ii. By faith
    - 1. Our dependence upon Christ Jesus is the means by which we are united to that historical person and his historical work, both past, present and future

2. We, who are desperate sinners, weakened by the corruption of our original sin, are not *hopeless*, don't have to achieve our own righteousness, we are given Christ's righteousness by faith alone
- c. We have peace with God through Jesus our Lord
  - i. We have peace with God
    1. Peace - the way things are supposed to be
    2. No longer enemies, but friends
      - a. Reconciled to God (Col 1:21-23)
    3. Corruption and its twin, guilt, overcome by the blood of Jesus and the power of His risen life to make all things new
  - ii. Through Jesus our Lord
    1. He is the agent of our peace, the means and instrument of the flow of love and affection from God to Man
    2. Our peace with God is intrinsically and eternally tied to Jesus, and only Jesus
    3. Coming to Christ Jesus means coming to Him as the Master over us, the Giver of Life, the Seer of Wisdom, the One who knows what makes our life flourish and submitting to His words as the words of life and righteousness