

Title: Gifts Accompanying Faith and Repentance

Text: Luke 23: 39-43

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Luke 23: 32: And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. 33: And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 34: Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. 35: And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. 36: And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, 37: And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. 38: And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39: And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40: But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41: And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42: And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43: And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

My continual prayer for the New Year (and every year) is that Christ might call out his lost sheep and bring honor to his name. The one thing I desire most for our lost children and loved ones this New Year is that God might give them repentance from dead works and faith in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. As I was thinking on this, I came across this passage concerning the repentant thief on the cross.

Proposition: We see here gifts accompanying true repentance and faith.

Subject: Gifts Accompanying Repentance and Faith

THE FEAR OF GOD

Luke 23: 39: And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40: But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God...?"

The first gift we will consider that accompanies repentance and faith is the fear of God. By nature there was no difference in the two thieves. A few moments before both men railed on Christ.

Matthew 27: 44: The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Both thieves were guilty, condemned and being executed for their crimes, both were spiritually dead in sins, both had hearts that were enmity against God. Neither thief respected the law of God, neither respected Christ, neither were religious and neither were seeking God. Both were equal distance from the Savior, both were about to face God in judgment and both needed forgiveness.

Yet, God left one to his own will under the bondage of sin but God granted the other faith and repentance. The difference was God chose one before the foundation of the world by free grace. The difference was Christ was bearing the sin of one thief and bearing the wrath of God in his place. The difference was the Holy Spirit of God quickened that one

Romans 9: 16: So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

Left to his own depraved will, the one thief merely feared death, “*If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.*” He had no fear of Christ his God; no reverence in his heart for God the Father nor his Son, Jesus Christ

Psalm 36: 1: The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*

Romans 3: 14: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: 15: Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: 16: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: 17: And the way of peace have they not known: 18: There is no fear of God before their eyes.

But God gave the other thief a holy fear of God in his new heart—“*But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God...?*” What is the fear of God? The fear of the Lord is a gift of God given in the new birth. It is an attribute of the new spirit, the new man the Holy Spirit of God creates within. Fear of God is opposite enmity against God and opposite pride of the flesh. The fear of God is causes a broken and contrite spirit. It is not a servile fear but a reverential awe of Holy God. It makes a sinner desire to be found in God’s favor. It makes a sinner sorry for sin—not merely because he got caught or feels guilty—but because it is against God his Father and Christ his Redeemer. It makes a sinner submissive to the Lord. These things are why scripture says,

Psalm 111:10: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:...

Ecclesiastes 8: 12: Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: 13: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

The impenitent thief perished in his sins because he did not fear God. The repentant thief was saved by God because God gave him a fear of the Lord in his heart.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Luke 23: 40:...seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41: And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds:

The second thing we see that accompanies faith and repentance is a confession of our sin. The repentant thief confessed he was justly being condemned. He confessed that he was receiving the due reward for his sinfulness.

When a sinner is given a fear of God he beholds the holiness of God—that God is too pure, too just, too holy to receive us because we are so sinful. We are given this light in Light of God’s Holy character. When Isaiah saw God’s glory in the temple and heard the seraphim cry, “*Holy, holy, holy*” then Isaiah cried out—“*Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips*” (Isa. 6:5). When Job saw God all his holy character, Job confessed, “*I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.*” (Job 42: 5, 6) Likewise, when God gave this thief a sight of God’s holy character, he confessed his sin and owned his condemnation to be just.

Men who think highly of their own goodness and works have no view of the holiness of God. Therefore, they do not see their sin. They do not see they are in danger of judgment. They cannot and will not take sides with God against themselves.

But the sinner taught of God knows the exceeding sinfulness of sin and declares God just to condemn him. So with true repentance and faith there will be, one, a fear of God and two, a confession of sin.

GLORYING IN CHRIST

Luke 23: 41:...but this man hath done nothing amiss.

The next thing we see that accompanies faith and repentance is a glorying in Christ. It is the gift of God to believe Christ to be the sinless, GodMan, who knew no sin. Christ was typified in the Passover Lamb. Therefore, God said,

Exodus 12: 5: Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:

Christ was typified in the priests. Therefore, a man with a blemish could not serve in the priesthood and could not offer a sacrifice for sin.

Leviticus 21: 16: And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17: Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever *he be* of thy seed in their generations that hath *any* blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. 18: For whatsoever man *he be* that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, 19: Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, 20: Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; 21: No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.

Christ alone is the spotless Lamb of God and the sinless, holy High Priest:

1 Peter 2:22: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

This was necessary so that Christ was fit to be made sin for his people. This was typified when the sins of the children of Israel were ceremonially transferred to a lamb:

Leviticus 4:24: And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD: *it is* a sin offering.

The Hebrew word translated “sin offering” is “sin.” Therefore, when speaking of what the anti-type, Christ Jesus was actually made for his people, it is translated “sin” rather than “sin offering:”

2 Corinthians 5: 21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The reason Christ had to be made sin is because his people were made sin in Adam. But Christ would not break the law as Adam did. Therefore, Christ the Lamb came to God in the garden of Gethsemane and the Lord made him sin—*the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Due to him being made sin, God imputed sin to Christ. God only imputed sin to Adam after he was made sin. God only imputed sin to us after we were made sin by Adam’s disobedience. And God only imputed sin to Christ after he made him sin for us. God does not impute what is not true.

Thank God this is true because now God imputes righteousness to the believer because we really, truly were in Christ's loins when he justified us. We really were crucified in Christ when he was crucified. Our body of sin was really destroyed when Christ was crucified. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ!" God will not impute sin to us because in Christ is no sin. Christ really, truly put away the sin of his people and in him is no sin.

So it is necessary for God's elect to be made to behold Christ the sinless, GodMan, who was made sin for us, in whom we bore the wrath of God and died and were raised again. This thief knew Christ was not dying for his own sin but as a Substitute—*this man hath done nothing amiss*. So accompanying true faith and repentance is one, a fear of God, two, a confession of our sin, and three, a true understanding of Christ in his person and substitutionary death which makes us glory in Christ alone.

SUBMISSION TO CHRIST

Luke 23: 42: *And he said unto Jesus, Lord...*

The next thing we see accompanying faith and repentance is submission to Christ. There is no true worship until we are made to submit and bow down in our hearts to Christ as our Lord.

Men preach what they call "*Lordship Salvation*." Usually they say those who believe on Christ, must not only believe him to be their Savior but to be their Lord. This is true. But most say it in order to bring sinners back under the law.

Listen carefully! The sinner who claims Christ is his Lord yet continues to work under the law to make himself righteous or holy has not bowed to Christ as Lord. Bowing to Christ as Lord is bowing to Christ as my complete and total Savior. True obedience which owns Christ as Lord, casts all care on Christ to do be my Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.

Romans 10: 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

True Lorship salvation is owning Christ to be my Lord so that I submit to Christ as my only Righteousness, my only Sanctification, my only Redemption. We do so...

Galatians 2: 16: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17: But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

The law is the ministration of death because it reveals sin and declares us guilty. Christ is the minister of Righteousness, not the minister of the law that declares us dead in sin. And Christ is our Sanctification who does not bring the believer to continue to work to make himself holy and just before men but who makes us bow to Christ as our Sanctification through the hearing of the gospel. Who then is responsible if a man continues to attempt to make himself righteous or holy under the law?

Galatians 2: 18: For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

That which most call progressive sanctification is not the work of Christ in the heart but is a sinner making himself a transgressor against Christ himself. It is true because the believer is made to know by Christ that he is dead to the law by Christ.

Galatians 2: 19: For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and 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.

Therefore, true Lorship salvation submits to Christ, saying,

Galatians 2: 21: I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Believers obey Christ as Lord by living by faith and doing all by love, not law and this is by the constraining of Christ in our new hearts.

Galatians 5: 4: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Preacher do you mean when the thief on the cross addressed Christ as Lord, he meant all that? Yes! He may not have been able to tell you all this but he meant it all in his heart when he submitted to him as Lord!

A PLEA FOR MERCY

Luke 23: 42:...Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

The next thing that accompanies faith and repentance will be a plea for mercy. The thief did not ask to be remembered for any goodness in him or works done by him. His plea was the same plea of the publican who would not so much as look up to heaven but smote upon his breast saying, “*God be merciful to me a sinner.*”

We see here what we are saying when we beg God for mercy. He owned that Christ alone could show him mercy and save him, “*Remember me.*” He owned Christ to be successful believing he would arise triumphant—“*when thou comest into thy kingdom.*” He owned Christ to be the true King of his people, “*When thou comest into thy kingdom.*”

We have not exalted Christ in any of this nor have we begged mercy if we are expecting to be saved by anything we do. A true plea for mercy exalts Christ. This is why God delights to show mercy to all who come to him through faith in Christ.

Micah 6:8: He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly [*with thy God*, owing Christ to be the just One and me the sinner], and to love mercy [*with thy God* by coming to Christ confessing he alone can save me by his mercy] and to walk humbly with thy God? [by submitting to Christ as my Lord, my complete Righteousness and Holiness]

And since all these gifts glorifies Christ there is one more gift that accompanies faith and repentance:

A SURE ANSWER

Luke 23: 43: And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

May God grant his people repentance and faith that we might come to Christ as this repentant thief came.

Amen!