

The Wednesday Word, Sept. 11, 2013: The Saviour, Not a Helper

Though He was above the law, Christ took His place under the law to save us (Galatians 4: 4). He lived a sinless life, then, on the cross, endured the awful penalties of the law. Not only did He redeem us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13), He also fulfilled the law, for righteousness, to every one that believes (Romans 10:4). He took our beating so that we would have His blessings without barter.

We must always remember that Christ, when it comes to salvation, is not a helper, He is the Saviour! By this, I mean that He did not come to help us to save ourselves by keeping a more relaxed and toned down law. No! The gospel truth is that faith in Christ is not a means of setting aside the inflexible standard of the law. To the contrary, faith in Christ is, in reality, the only method of successfully meeting the law's demands. Faith in Christ Jesus is an acknowledgement that we are guilty before the law and incapable of mustering, within ourselves, a sufficient obedience to meet its requirements. At the same time, faith in Christ, also acknowledges that the Lord Jesus has kept the unadulterated law in our place. Faith recognises that the Lord Christ came to fulfil the Law on our behalf! He is the Saviour, not a helper!

The cross was the satisfaction rendered for all the unfulfilled and violated demands of the divine majesty. That which God's law righteously required, God graciously provided in the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ's substitutionary life and death satisfied the just demands of the violated law. This is good news! All who believe and rely on the Christ of God have, by righteous grace, been credited with the entirety of His accomplishments. As a result, all believers are now seen as perfect law keepers in the eyes of the Father.

Consider how the Father dealt with Jesus on the cross. Christ was the eternal Word made flesh. He was the righteousness of God, yet He was, "numbered with the transgressors"(Isaiah 53:12). Justice dealt with Him, not according to what He was in Himself, but treated Him as though He were us.

At the cross, our sins were imputed (legally reckoned) to Him.

At the cross, His righteousness was imputed (legally reckoned) to us.

In Romans 4, the marvellous little word *logizomai* (impute, reckon, count) appears eleven times. Paul illustrated this powerful word when he wrote to his friend about Onesimus, the runaway slave. He says in verse 18 of the letter to Philemon that if Onesimus owes anything, or if he's wronged you in any way, put that to my account. This is imputation. Our debts are put into Christ's account, and Christ's righteousness is put into ours.

There was a man who was once preaching the gospel to some English fishermen. His subject was justification by free grace and he was trying to make Christ's work on the cross both clear and plain. He finally asked the men the question, "Now will one of you tell me in your own words what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross?" One old fisherman who had been deeply moved by the message, with some tears in his eyes looked up at the preacher and answered, "He swapped with me." What a great answer! This man had grasped the truth of the penal, substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our salvation is only in him. He is the Saviour, not a helper.

And that's the Gospel Truth!