

Unwrapping Our Greatest Gift

Justification: God's Answer for the Performance Trap

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Message Truth:

Each person who has received Christ as Savior is the recipient of God's greatest gift. Too often, however, we fail to realize our full potential as Christians. One reason for this failure is the confusion in the minds of many Christians concerning their salvation. Too few of us fully unwrap the meaning and significance contained in the gift of our salvation. This Christmas we will seek to better understand the gift of our salvation. While each of us who have accepted Christ as Savior are complete, often we fail to fully realize our full potential as Christians. Former attitudes, habits and false beliefs impede our spiritual progress. Today we will focus on the "performance trap" and the facet of our salvation known as justification.

① Many people mistakenly believe that if they can maintain a high level of p_____ they will s_____ and this success will bring fulfillment and h_____.

Christians who are ensnared in the performance trap can become a p_____ or l_____.

Perfectionists tend to react defensively to criticism and demand to be in control of most situations they encounter. Unfortunately, they begin to base their self worth on their ability to perform rather than on the work Christ accomplished on their behalf on the cross.

Legalists tend to define their worth on their ability to meet certain standards. They begin to define their righteousness based on their own ability to live by their own set of rules. This robs them of the ability to accept God's grace for themselves, and prevents them from extending grace to others.

If you are caught in the performance trap, you need to better understand that Jesus has justified you through His work on the cross.

Justification

The act of being made righteous whereby God transfers our sin to Christ and His righteousness to us.

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

¹⁷ . . . "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

Hebrews 10:17

Christ alone is the source of our forgiveness, freedom, joy, and purpose.

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

My understanding God's grace compels me to action because my love for God motivates me to please the One who has so freely loved me.

I act because I want to, not because I have to perform to be accepted.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Our obedience to God is an expression of our I _____ for Him.

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will obey what I command²¹ Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." John 14:15,21

Jesus' work on the cross satisfied God's righteous wrath directed against my sin, enabling me to have the status of righteousness.

The Moment We Trust Christ

- **A_____ your sins are forgiven**

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Colossians 2:13-15

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. I John 1:9

- **You become a c_____ of G_____**

¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

John 1:12

- **You receive e_____ life**

²⁴ "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. John 5:24

- **You are delivered from Satan's d_____ and transferred into the k_____ of Christ**

¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

Colossians 1:13