

Isaiah 45:22-25 – Consolations from Christ’s Imputed Righteousness

Introduction: Acts 24:24-25 “And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. [25] Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.’”

When the gospel is preached it always has had a wide range of responses. Deep within the hearts of men, however, there is a nagging sense of eternity. There is a nagging sense of: “Our day is coming.” Judgment Day. Whether men scoff at it, are indifferent toward it, or are like Felix – just try to put it out of your mind for the time being and pretend it isn’t coming – it is surely coming. Paul told the Athenians:

Acts 17:30-31 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, [31] because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Everything is building toward this climactic moment. There will be this one great event in the life of every human being created in the image of God. All will be summoned and all will hear their final verdict in that day. The indifferent, those who mocked Christ and God’s existence, hypocrites, heretics, false teachers, purveyors of false gospels, people who rolled their eyes at the gospel, people who persecuted Christ’s followers, as well as the repentant believers in the Lord Jesus – those who repented and cast their hope of forgiveness and legal justification at this judgment event upon Christ alone.

The very last point of the very last chapter of the Westminster Confession reads:

“As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity:(1) so will He have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.(2)”

When Moses first appears before Pharaoh, Pharaoh expresses the pride and arrogance of the wicked in a smug question he asks Moses:

Exodus 5:1-2 Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says YHWH God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.' " [2] And Pharaoh said, "Who is YHWH, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know YHWH, nor will I let Israel go."

By the end of the 10 plagues – as Egypt was mourning over the deaths of all the firstborn in their land, Pharaoh’s attitude changes:

Exodus 12:30-31 So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. [31] Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve YHWH as you have said.

Application: Men will get away with their scoffing and mockery for a time, but God will eventually bring them all to their knees.

Psalm 9:16 The Lord is known by the judgment He executes;

Application: God didn’t begin by judging Pharaoh, but after He did, Pharaoh *knew* who He was...

For those who know Christ, the Day of Judgment is not something to fear. It is rather something we eagerly await. Indeed, we long for it! Why? Because the Judgment of God against my sins was fully discharged at the cross of Calvary *already*.

Romans 8:23-25 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. [24] For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? [25] But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

And so, the true Christian sings out with Horatio Spafford in the last verse of “It is well with my soul” – “O Lord haste the day, when the faith shall be sight, the sky be rolled back as a scroll. The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, even so, it is well with my soul.”

Recall the heart of Paul’s gospel:

Romans 4:4-8 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. [5] But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, [6] just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: [7] "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; [8] Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin."

God justifies the repentant believer in Jesus Christ *even though they are still wicked and ungodly in themselves*. God is able to pronounce the wicked to be just because He imputes the repentant believer’s sins to Christ on the cross, and imputes the perfect obedience and righteousness of Christ to their account. And thus, the repentant believer is pardoned of all his sins and is perfectly accepted in God’s sight in Christ. Jesus Christ *does it all*. Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, sin hath left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.

What I want to celebrate with you today is 5 *consolations* every true Christian has in Christ’s imputed righteousness. I am going to ask you to turn to a few passages, but the rest I will simply read for you.

1. In the imputed righteousness of Christ, there is enough to satisfy the justice of God and to put away all of His judicial anger against our sins.

Turn to: Hebrews 10:10-12, 14 [10] By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. [11] And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. [12] But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ... [14] For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Isaiah 53:4-6 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. [5] But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Ezekiel 16:61-63 Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you. [62] And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, [63] that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done," says the Lord God.' "

When the Lord Jesus died, the land was covered with darkness and there was a great earthquake. In his great book, *The Holiness of God*, R. C. Sproul says it was as if God the Father grabbed the earth in His fist and shook it in His holy wrath against sin. And then Jesus died. “It is finished” were His final words. For the elect of Christ, for the church given by the Father to Jesus before time began, *the anger of God is forever appeased – it is gone for eternity*. And our sins are cast into the sea of forgetfulness and will never be brought against us – yes even our present sins and all our future sins. By “one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.” All those Christ died for are *perfected* by that sacrifice.

Application: When we sit and contemplate ourselves and our thousands, millions of offenses, sins, omissions, and failures, it is no wonder that we tremble. But the word of the gospel teaches us to look to Christ’s satisfaction of God’s justice against us. Remember His crown of thorns. Remember the mockery He endured when they dressed Him in a purple robe and put a scepter in His hand. Remember the nails that held Him to that wood. And remember this part of the God-breathed narrative:

Luke 9:51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,

Application: It was the *passion* of Christ's heart to be our Savior, our dying substitute. Luke 9:51 uses the verb: *sterizo* – to cause to be inwardly firm or committed. The direct object of that verb is "His face." The NAS render it: "that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem." When the time came for the cross, Jesus knew His mission – He knew why He had been born – And it was because of the great love that He had and still has for His people that He steadfastly, resolutely, firmly *set His face* to go to Jerusalem to finish His work. As much agony, bitterness, and terror were awaiting Him there, *He was resolute in going to do it*. Jesus, God the Son in human flesh, has willingly entered into that pact with the Father and the Holy Spirit before the foundation of the world to take the fullness of the divine justice upon His own body and soul at Calvary at just the right time in history.

Application 2: As that glorious verse of the Word of God says: "... when the time had come for Him to be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

Application 3: If you are a repentant believe in Jesus Christ and you trust only in Him and have pronounced a curse upon your own works, character, and life in order that you would have Christ's righteousness as your own, then by *His stripes*, you have been healed, He was wounded for your transgressions, bruised for your iniquities... and the LORD has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. **In the imputed righteousness of Christ, there is enough to satisfy the justice of God and to put away all of His judicial anger against our sins.** The Holy Justice of the Holy Judge before Whom all men must appear has smiled at us because it fell in all its horrible darkness upon Christ. The wrath of God is satisfied, and the curse of the law against God's people *is no more*.

2. The Imputed Righteousness of Christ presents us perfectly righteous in the sight of God.

1 Cor. 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

Christ is "righteousness" in our behalf – for us. The filthy rags of pretended righteousness we used to wear were taken from us and put upon the righteous body and soul of Jesus. And then He faced the judgment of the Holy Father. Think of it. Christ appeared before the Holy Judge accounted legally as if all our filth was His own. The perfect, white robe of obedience He earned was taken from Him and put upon us while our filth was given to Him. Imagine how horrifying those moments were for Him. To appear as if He had lived our sin-filled lives, and then to be condemned and sentence to bear the full force of the curse of the law against us!

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Consider with me how Jesus accomplished our righteous standing before God in His work. Jesus had no human father. This was essential because every human being descended from Adam by "ordinary generation" (meaning, normal male and female procreation) have the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to them, the lack of the original righteousness in which Adam was created, and the corruption of our whole nature (which is what Original Sin is), together with all of our actual transgression which flow from our corrupted nature. But Jesus enters into human history taking the substance of His humanity from Mary – but one of the central doctrines of Christianity is the Virgin Birth of Christ. Jesus did not have a natural, human father. Jesus is the Second Adam or the Last Adam:

1 Cor. 15:45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Application: The attribute of God which causes the biggest problem for sinners is the holiness of God – and its accompanying justice and wrath against sin. The first Adam in Eden represented all of humanity and he failed as our representative. God had imposed a covenant of works upon Adam – *and upon all of Adam's posterity "in Adam."*

Question: Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? Answer: The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.

The greatest problem facing humanity is that every single one of us is just as bound to render perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience to God all of our lives as Adam was. And we don't.

Application: This is why Jesus had to be born of a Virgin with no human father – so He would not have Original Sin. This is why Jesus had to be born under the law – under its obligations – in order to fulfill the law's righteous requirements *in our behalf*.

Romans 8:4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

No human being ever led a godly life like Jesus did. Every temptation He face, He defeated. Every righteous requirement of God's laws was obeyed entirely from His heart in thought, word, deed, and motive. And His obedience led Him all the way to the cross of Christ:

Philip. 2:8 [8] And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Everything God's law requires, Christ did perfectly in His obedience to it. And every bit of its curses for our disobedience was laid upon Him. And the result is:

Ephes. 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him ...

Ephes. 5:25-27 ... as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, [26] that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, [27] that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Application: Our appearance before God without spot, or wrinkle, as glorious, as holy, and without blemish is because Christ was regarded as having all our spots, wrinkles, sins, and blemishes when He died. And thus: **The Imputed Righteousness of Christ presents us perfectly righteous in the sight of God.**

3. The Imputed Righteousness of Christ answers all our fears, doubt, and troubles of our souls.

Point: While Christians are at varying degrees of sanctification, *justification has no degrees*. It is identical and equal in all who are justified. The justified person has had all of their sins pardoned. And Christ's real righteousness has been truly imputed or reckoned to their account in the sight of God such that they are once-for-all-eternity legally pronounced righteous before God's judgment. And therefore, the justified person is truly happy and blessed. The great Puritan, Thomas Brooks wrote:

How shall I look up to God? The answer is 'in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.' How shall I have any communion with a holy God in this world? the answer is 'in the righteousness of Christ.' How shall I find acceptance with God? The answer is 'in the righteousness of Christ.' How shall I die? The answer is 'in the righteousness of Christ.' How shall I stand before the judgment seat? The answer is 'in the righteousness of Christ.' Your sure and only way, under all temptations, fears, conflicts, doubts, and disputes is by faith to remember Christ and the sufferings of Christ as your Mediator and Surety. Say, 'O Christ, Thou art my sin, in being made sin for me; and Thou art my curse, being made a curse for me' (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal 3:13); or rather, 'I am Thy sin, and Thou art my righteousness; I am Thy curse, and Thou art my blessing; I am Thy death, and Thou art my life; I am the wrath of God to Thee, and Thou art the love of God to me; I am Thy hell, and Thou art my heaven.'

Application: When you are plagued with doubt, depression, grief because of ongoing sin in your life, what is the answer? The Imputed Righteousness of Christ. When you've sinned yet again – so stubbornly, so defiantly – and you are in mourning because of how evil you are and you wonder how God could possibly love you and save you. What's the answer: The Imputed Righteousness of Christ. If

you know the grief and anguish of soul that comes from God-given repentance, and if you trust only in Jesus to save you from the danger and filth of your own sin – then take heart, the imputed righteousness of Christ is in your heavenly account before God. Just as surely as the guilt of your sins were born by Christ at the cross there just outside of Jerusalem 2000 years ago, the perfect righteousness of Christ now covers you as a garment and gives you full and bold access to the heavenly courts.

4. The Imputed Righteousness of Christ gives us title to these treasures: “a kingdom that cannot be shaken, riches that neither moth nor rust can destroy, an inheritance of the whole world that does not fade away, and a house not made with hands – eternal in the heavens.”

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, [5] who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

2 Cor. 5:1-4 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, [3] if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. [4] For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

Illustration: When you buy tickets to something and they come in the mail, you have to keep those tickets safe somewhere and you’ve got to make sure you remember to bring them, or else you can’t be let into the show.

The great wedding banquet has been planned by the Triune God, paid for by the blood of Christ, and those who are broken in their sin, are repentant, and who have received and are resting upon Christ alone as He is offered to us in the gospel, *they have their wedding garment on already*. In the great parable of the Wedding Banquet, when a man enters without that garment on, Jesus describes the scene:

Matthew 22:11-13 But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. [12] So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. [13] Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Application: No matter what else a person might have, nothing can compare to the garment of salvation. Nothing can compare to what Isaiah called “the robe of righteousness.”

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Application 2: All of human history was waiting for the promised seed of the woman to crush the serpent’s head. And Christ finally came – and achieved what Adam failed to achieve. And paid the penalty for Adam’s failure. And the salvation He accomplished is portrayed and pictured to us in Scripture as a robe of righteousness, as a garment of salvation with which we are clothed.

Hark back to the Garden of Eden. Remember this scene after Adam sinned?

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Genesis 3:21 Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

Do you see the symbolism here? Do you hear it in Isaiah? Do you see it in the imputed righteousness? God *cannot look upon us as sinners and accept us*. His justice will not allow it. And that’s why we need

Christ! God can look upon His Son – and He can look upon us if we are hidden in Him. If we have Christ, if we have *put on Christ*. Listen to these passages:

Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Col. 3:3-4 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Application: Is your life hidden *with Christ in God*? Is Christ “your life.” When He appears, *will you also appear with Him in glory*? Only if you have the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Application 2: Have you renounced your fig-leaves? Have you recognized that what you think is “righteousness” is to God a filthy rag that stinks of death? Have you repented that you ever thought you were *good enough* to get to heaven? Have you abandoned all hope in your own garment of alleged good works, taken that garment off and given it to Christ at the cross to bear its curse – so that you could be given the perfect, pristine, white robe of Christ’s most righteous obedience and His most complete satisfaction of divine justice? Or will the king of the wedding banquet see you wearing your filth and say: “Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?” The man’s response in the parable is haunting. Jesus says: “And he was speechless.” Will you be given an entrance into the halls of heaven, the marriage supper of the Lamb, the Great Feast, the Wedding Banquet?

Thomas Brooks wrote: “The righteousness of Christ cannot be lost. His righteousness is like Himself, from everlasting to everlasting. When once this white raiment is put upon a believer, it can never fall off; it can never be taken off. This splendid glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ is as really a believer’s as if he had wrought it himself.” What are you wearing to that banquet friend?

There is only one ticket to the wedding banquet, only one garment that will do: *The Imputed Righteousness of Christ*. The Imputed Righteousness of Christ gives us title to these treasures: “a kingdom that cannot be shaken, riches that neither moth nor rust can destroy, an inheritance of the whole world that does not fade away, and a house not made with hands – eternal in the heavens.”

5. In the Imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ, we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Ephes. 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...

Man, in the final analysis, is a covenantal creature. Every one of us is just as bound to perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience to the law of God as Adam was. And because of this, apart from the effectual, powerful grace of God in Christ, we are under the wrath and curse of God. With God and His dealings with men, there is “blessing” and there is “curse.” We are either under God’s blessing, or we are under God’s curse.

Turn to: Galatians 3:10-14 For as many as are of the works of the law are **under the curse**; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” [Citation from the end of “the law” Deuteronomy 27:26] [11] But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.” [12] Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.” [13] Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), [That’s the cross] [14] that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Christ is cursed in order that we would be blessed. The curse of the law for our disobedience fell upon Jesus in order that the blessing he earned by doing the law might be imputed to us. And therefore, “in Christ” we have *every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*. What we have described here this morning and this precious truth of the imputed righteousness of Christ – this is the only provision the Holy God of heaven and earth has made for the salvation of sinners and for their true reconciliation with God. Do you have the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to your account?

Conclusion: Some people seem to want everything in the world: fame, power, money, possession, and the praises of men. How quickly do our affections and hearts can love and long for worldly things! How quickly we are attached to this world. But Paul described his ministry in these very interesting words in **2 Corinthians 6:10**: “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” Paul also said: **2 Cor. 4:17-18** “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, [18] while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” And our Lord taught us a very simple truth: **Matthew 16:26** “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” Where is your treasure? Where is your hope in the face of your most certain appointment with death? The person who dies without the imputed righteousness with Christ, dies not only with nothing, he loses even his eternal soul and is sent to hell under the curse of God. But he who has the imputed righteousness of Christ has *every spiritual blessing* – he has the true riches, he has God as His portion in this life and the next, he shall inherit the earth, he has full pardon of all his sins, he has been judicially pronounced righteous already, he shall never perish but shall have eternal life, he looks to the Day of Judgment with eager expectation because Christ is his all-in-all, he has:

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
 This is the power of Christ in me;
 From life's first cry to final breath,
 Jesus commands his destiny.
 No power of hell, no scheme of man,
 Can ever pluck him from His hand;
 Till He returns or calls me home,
 Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Where is this glorious expectation found? Where is this wondrous hope? Where is the entirety of our hope for a happy eternal after life? *The imputed righteousness of Christ*. He who has this has the true riches. And he who does not has nothing.

Benediction: Numbers 6:24-26 –

"The Lord bless you and keep you;
 The Lord make His face shine upon you,
 And be gracious to you;
 The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
 And give you peace." ' 1