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MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

Sin vs Righteousness



Atonement
By Derek Prince

We're going to begin again this session by repeating Hebrews 10:14 together in unison. This is our key verse. Are you ready?

> "For by one sacrifice he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

In the previous sessions we dealt with this theme that the death of Jesus on the cross was not an accident, it was not something that was forced upon Him, it was not something that God had not foreseen; but it was a sacrifice that God had ordained in which Jesus, as the priest, offered Himself to God as the sacrifice. And by that one sacrifice He made provision for all the needs of the whole human race in every area of our lives for time and for eternity.

I explained that the essence of the sacrifice was that it was a divinely ordained exchange. I want to emphasize this. I would say, in my experience, it took me years to see this clearly. But when I saw it, as they say, it was like a light went on. I really understood what had been accomplished. In this divinely ordained exchange all the evil that was due by justice to our sin came upon Jesus that all the good that was due to the sinless obedience of Jesus might be made available to us. More simply, all the evil came upon Jesus that all the good might be offered to us.

And you remember that I related how God spoke to me in a car in the compound of a hospital in Egypt? He said, "Consider the work of Calvary: a perfect work. Perfect in every respect, perfect in every aspect." And so, what we are doing is looking at different aspects of that perfect work. Altogether in these studies we'll probably look at about eight or nine or ten different aspects of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Yesterday we concluded by dealing with the first two aspects which are unfolded in Isaiah 53:4–5. We won't turn there immediately but simply say the first is that Jesus was punished for our sins that we might be forgiven. And having been forgiven that we might have peace with God.

And then on the physical plane, or if you like, in the physical aspect, Jesus was wounded physically that we might be healed physically. This is a truth which has been concealed from millions and millions of Christians over the years. The physical aspect of the atonement.

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I pointed out to you that in the New Testament, in the Greek, the standard word for "to save" is used probably a dozen times to describe physical healing, deliverance from demons, and even a little girl being raised from the dead. So that all this is included in the provision of God through the sacrifice of Jesus.

I'd like to say those two exchanges, I invite you to say them with me. Remember, we use our left hand for the bad things and our right hand for the good things. And remember that your left hand is on the opposite side to my left hand because we're facing one another. Okay? And just be careful you don't hit your neighbor on the nose. All right, are you ready? "Jesus was punished that we might be forgiven. Jesus was wounded that we might be healed." If you really believe that there's something you have to do. What's that? Say thank you, that's right. See, I'm going to come later when I explain how to appropriate that the real way to appropriate all the things we have to do are very simple. And one of the simplest and most practical ways to appropriate what God has done is to thank Him for it. If you really believe it you're bound to say thank you. Or else you're a very ungrateful person. And so, when you say thank you, you are actually releasing your faith. The Bible says in everything give thanks. In how many things? That's right.

All right. Now we're going to the next aspect of the exchange which is very simply sin and righteousness. We have to distinguish between sins plural and sin singular. Sins plural are the sinful acts that we have committed. And Jesus was punished that those sinful acts might be forgiven. Sin singular is the evil power or the evil nature that causes us to commit sins plural. Have you got that, it's important. There's sin singular which is an evil power, an evil nature, that causes us to commit sins plural. And until that evil power has been dealt with, our deliverance from sin is not complete. But the revelation of scripture in Isaiah is that on the cross the soul of Jesus was made sin as a sin offering with our sinfulness.

Now what's the opposite of sinfulness? It's righteousness. That we might be made righteous with His righteousness. Let's look at that now in the scriptures. Again, this is a truth which I find most, quote, Evangelical or Charismatic or whatever kind of Christian you call yourselves are not really aware of. It's like the devil has tried to steal our inheritance from us. If you really grasp what I'm trying to teach you this morning you will have to be excited. And if you're not excited I'll know you haven't grasped it.

I'm a logician by background. I'm not talking about emotionalism, I'm talking about the only logical response to what God has done for us. So we'll be checking on you to see.

Isaiah 53:10, still a part of this great atonement chapter, says:

> "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him [him is Jesus], he has put him to grief..."

I'd like to comment on that but it would take too long.

> "...when you make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

There is a clear prediction of the resurrection of Jesus. After He had been made the sin offering it says He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. That couldn't happen if he remained dead.

But let's focus on that statement that God the Father, as I understand it, made the soul of Jesus the sin offering, or the guilt offering. The key word there really is guilt. Now we have to understand that the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were just a preview of what God was really going to do through the sacrifice of Jesus. Under the Old Covenant, if a man committed a certain type of sin he was required to find the appropriate offering. It might be a bull, it might be a goat, it might be a sheep. And, he would bring it to the priest at the tabernacle and confess his sin. And the priest would lay his hands on the head of the animal, and by that act symbolically transferred the man's sin from the man to the animal. And then when the sin had been transferred to the animal the priest would exact the penalty from the animal and not from the man. And he would kill the sacrificial animal. The animal, in a certain sense, paying the penalty for the man's sin.

But in that ceremony the sin of the offerer was transferred from him to the sacrifice. All that is just a picture of what happened when Jesus was on the cross. God the Father transferred the sin of humanity to the soul of Jesus. And we have this amazing statement which none of us will ever fully fathom, that His soul was made the sin offering for the human race. When we consider the absolute purity and holiness of Jesus, none of us can even begin to see what was involved in making His soul the sin offering to humanity. I think many of us, if we were to think back on our past lives, would think of things that we wish would

have never happened, things that we'd be embarrassed to remember. And we'd feel a kind of revulsion. But think of the sinless Son of God taking upon Himself the total sinfulness of the entire race. I believe that was the cup that He was reluctant to drink. I don't think it was primarily the physical suffering, although that was very real, but I think it was the awful burden of human sin that he was going to take upon Himself that He said, "If it be possible, let this cup be removed from me." But then He said, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

So on the cross Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness. Now we need to turn to the New Testament, to 2 Corinthians 5:21. Many of you have read this without realizing that Paul was quoting Isaiah 53:10. Because, we have to understand that the sin offering became sin so that the same word is used for sin or guilt and for the guilt offering. It's one of the same words, it's not different. So now, reading in 2 Corinthians 5:21 it says:

> "God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Now, there's the exchange very, very clear. Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness—now I want you to be ready to complete this—that we might be made righteous with His righteousness. Not ours but His. It's the righteousness of God. This is staggering but it's scriptural. We could never apprehend this by simply trying or being good. There's only one way to apprehend this, that's by faith. We have to believe, I would say, incredible statement that Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Now I want to say before you this morning I believe that. I don't believe it because I've earned it or because I've tried to. I believe it because I believe the Bible and it's in the Bible. It's a breathtaking revelation.

In the Old Testament, again in the prophet Isaiah who is often called the gospel in the Old Testament, Isaiah 61, we have a very beautiful picture of this exchange and its results. Isaiah 61:10:

> "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord."

Not I will be moderately happy but I will greatly rejoice. The Hebrew is so emphatic. The word for "to rejoice" in Hebrew is sous. And when you're really emphatic in Hebrew you repeat the verb. So this is sous asees adoni. I will rejoice rejoicing in the Lord.

> "My soul shall be joyful in my God..."

Now why? Here's the reason.

> "For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness."

Notice there's a double transaction. First of all, salvation. God takes away the filthy garments of our sin and clothes us with the garments of salvation. I trust that everybody here has been clothed with the garment of salvation. This is a personal matter, you have to make your mind up. But what I want to tell you is it's wonderful to be clothed with the garment of salvation but don't stop there because that's not the end. He has also covered me with a robe of righteousness. One of the modern versions says "he has wrapped me around with a robe of righteousness." So when I am saved, if I will accept it, I can be clothed with the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. And the technical religious word for that is justified.

Now you need to know that in the Biblical language just and righteous are the same word. So justified means made righteous, made just. I'd like to give you just a little sort of picture of what it means to be justified because a lot of people use this religious phrase and don't really see any meaning in it. Let's suppose you are being tried in the supreme court of the universe for a crime which you've been charged with for which the mandatory penalty is death. And you're sitting there awaiting the verdict and the verdict comes back not guilty. Believe me, you'd be excited. You wouldn't walk out of that courtroom and shake the judge by the hand and say, "Thank you, judge, it was a nice message," tell the people that you're sharing with, "We had a good meeting this morning." You would be so excited you'd embrace your wife, you'd jump up and down, you'd say, "I'm free! I'm acquitted! I'm not guilty!" A tremendous burden would roll off your shoulders. That's what it is to be justified. Your case has been tried in the supreme court of heaven and the court has handed down the verdict—not guilty. Amen. Not guilty!

I'll give you a few words which sum up justify. You're acquitted, okay? You're not guilty. You're reckoned righteous. That's one of the meanings of the Greek word. But you're not merely reckoned righteous, you're made righteous. Same word. So, you've probably heard this, I think I've done a lot to propagate it in the Body of Christ. When I say I'm justified I mean I'm "just-as-if-I'd" never sinned. Let me say that again. Why don't we say that? You

say it after me if you really believe it. "I'm justified, I'm just-as-if-I'd never sinned, because I've been made righteous with the righteousness of God." Which has never known sin. It has no guilty parts, there's nothing on which the devil can put his finger and say you're guilty. Nothing left, it's totally abolished.

See, I tell you, if you really understood that you couldn't help being excited. When I attended the Anglican Church over the years as a boy in Britain, and this is no criticism of the Anglican Church. It has the most beautiful liturgy and the most lovely words. But in my critical teenage mind I looked at the people who said those words and I said to myself it doesn't seem to me they really believe what they're saying. I had a little mental picture of one of these dignified ladies walking out of the church and I walking behind her. And she dropped her lace handkerchief. So I run up behind her, pick up the handkerchief and say, "Madam, here's your handkerchief. You've dropped it." And she'd get much more excited about getting her handkerchief back than all the things she'd said in church. Because, they'd never been made real to her.

What I'm seeking to do this morning is make real to you the fact that you are justified. There's nothing in the record of heaven against you. There's nothing that the devil can accuse you of if you keep your position in Christ.

See, the devil's primary weapon against humanity is guilt. I would warn you to be very careful about anything or anyone that makes you feel guilty. Because, I don't believe that comes from God. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, of righteousness, of judgment. That's totally different. When the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, He says, "You did that and you did that. It was wrong. You need to repent and you need to put it right. And this is how you put it right." And when you've repented and put it right, the matter is closed. There's no afterthoughts, there's no further maybe you should have or perhaps I didn't. But guilt is not that way. With guilt you never quite know if you've done enough. Somebody says you didn't treat me right and you rejected me and I feel upset and hurt. It doesn't matter what you say or do to that person, it's never enough. That's not the Holy Spirit, that's another power.

Be on your guard against anything that makes you feel guilty because, in my opinion, it is never God. It's a denial of the work of the cross. Don't reject the conviction of the Holy Spirit, that's totally different. The conviction of the Holy Spirit is specific. It says this and this is what you did and you need to repent. And when you've confessed and repented and maybe done whatever was necessary to make restitution, that's it, the book is closed.

Let's look at just a couple of scriptures about the devil's attempt to make Christians feel guilty. And he'll succeed unless you base your stand on the sacrifice of Jesus. There's no other basis on which we can meet the devil and win but the basis of the cross. Isaiah 54:17. This is a promise to God's people and to each child of God.

> "No weapon formed against you shall prosper."

That's good news, isn't it? Nothing the devil can do as a weapon against you will succeed. Just relax for a moment, he's not going to succeed. He'll try hard but he'll fail. And then it says:

> "And every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn."

Notice, God doesn't say I'll condemn, He says you condemn. On the basis of what Jesus has done for you on the cross, you reject those accusations, you do not come under the guilt and the condemnation. You know what Romans 8:1 says?

> "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

And you'll notice if you study Romans, Romans 8 is the picture of the Spirit controlled life. But verse 1 is the entrance. And the only entrance is no condemnation. You cannot live the Spirit controlled life if you're under condemnation. You have to learn to deal with condemnation. God says you condemn them.

And then he says why. I'll read it again.

> "Every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage [the inheritance] of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from me, says the Lord."

It's not your righteousness, it's my righteousness I've transferred to you. And on that basis you can reject every accusation against you. You are not guilty. You're covered with the robe of righteousness. It doesn't matter from what angle the devil approaches you. All he sees is the righteousness of Christ.

Let's look at one final scripture, Revelation 12:10–11. This is, I believe, a picture of the final conflict of the ages which is primarily a spiritual conflict between the people of God and the kingdom of Satan. This is my view of it. And it says:

> "The inhabitants of heaven said, 'Now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ have come. For the accuser of our brethren who accused him before our God day and night has been cast out.'"

I believe this is still in the future. Who is the accuser? I didn't hear you. Satan. You do know that. What is he doing? Accusing us. Where? Before the throne of God. That's amazing but we can't go into that. Why is he accusing us? What does he want to prove us? One word, guilty, that's right. That's his weapon. Continual accusation. And believe me, if you don't know how to keep yourself, he has access to your mind and he'll have all sorts of accusations.

Then it says:

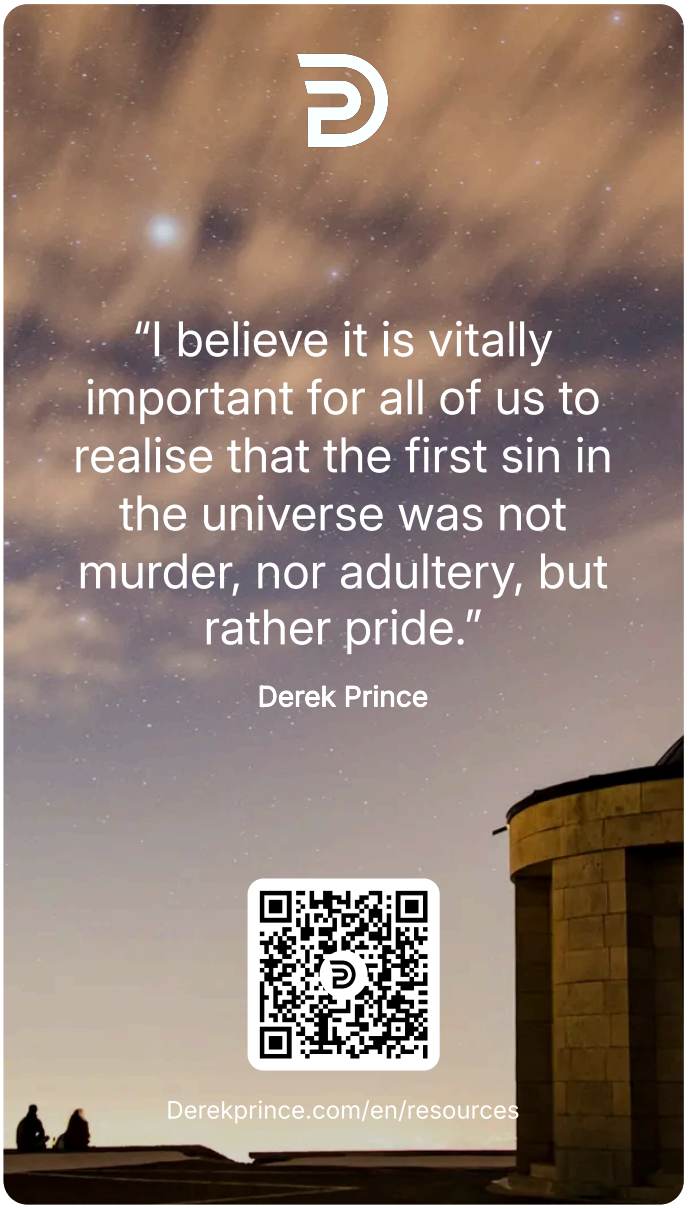
> "They [God's people] overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony..."

How do we do that? We testify personally to what the word says the blood of Jesus does for us. That's how we overcome him. I'm going to say that again and we close. We testify personally to what the word says the blood does for us. And Satan has no answer.

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Transcript: MV-4276-101-ENG
Last Updated: 16 Sept 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



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